HENRIK IBSEN

J. Leonard Levy.

DISCOURSES ON IBSEN

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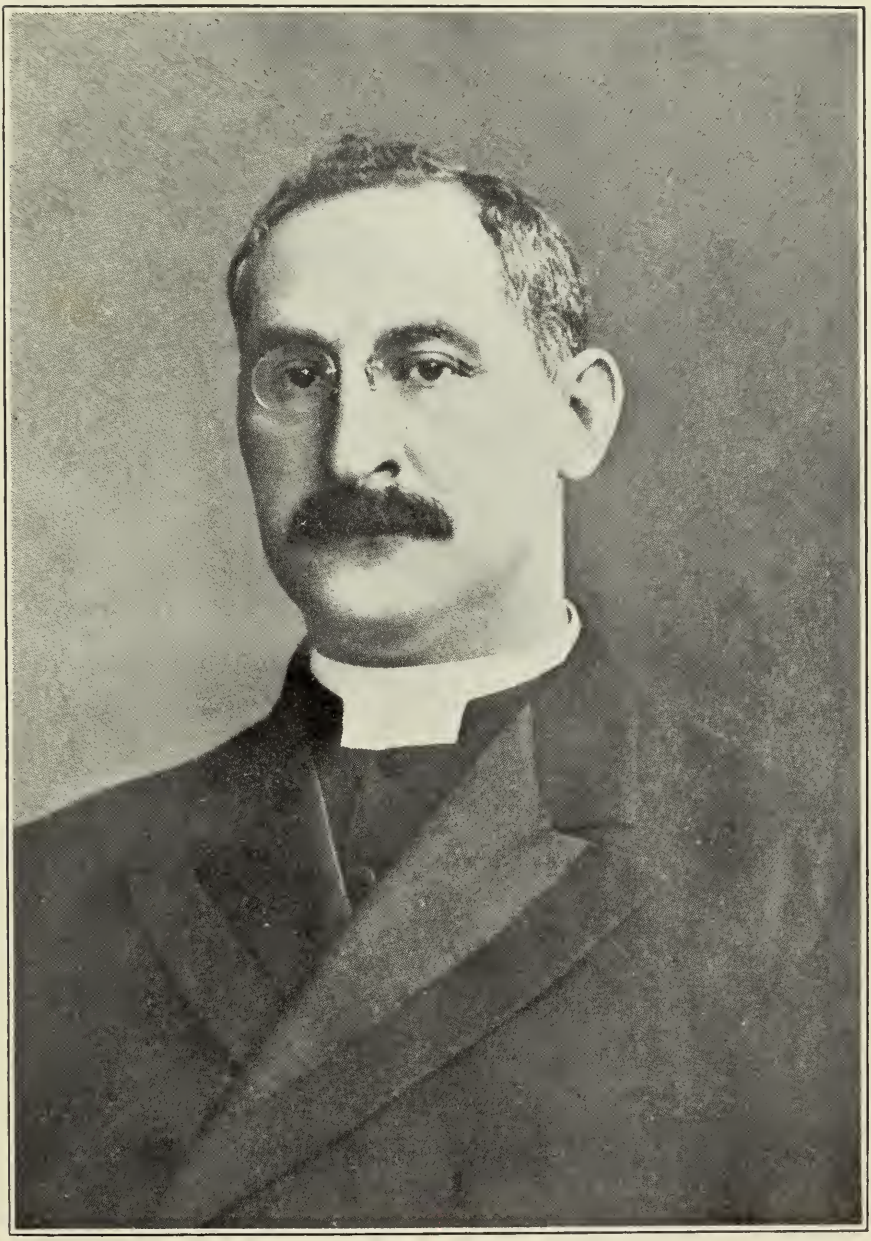

J. Leonard Levy

HENRIK IBSEN

I. The Man and His Message*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah i.

He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. (Isaiah xi., 4).

Before discussing during the coming weeks a few of the works of Norway's great dramatist, Henrik Ibsen, it is well for us to devote this morning to a brief consideration of the man and his message. It is impossible, and indeed unnecessary, for us to indulge in a criticism of his method and style, since we only know him through the translator. Our purpose is to use this master dramatist as a help to enforce a few truths which society needs to have repeated, and to this end we shall employ this morning in an endeavor to see the place, the time and the man, so that we may understand, however feebly, the import of his service.

Ibsen's Native Land.

We, therefore, this morning travel to the Land of the Midnight Sun, a land which has each year but "one long

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

day and one long night." We are, for the moment, in a country of beetling rocks and stupendous mountain chains, of wondrous bays and exquisitely beautiful inlets. We stand in the presence of terrifying precipices which run sheer from the mountain sides to the very billows of the deep. The rock-ribbed coast and the rock-bound fiords suggest invincibility. We stand awe-struck before the eternal snows. We see the pine striving to kiss the heavens. We behold the verdant grass striving to reach the summer sun.

Like Country, Like Poet.

Such a land naturally produces an adventurous and brave people. We are momentarily in the midst of a nation of Teutonic origin, as bold as the wind that dares to blow on every shore and sea, as hardy as the pine which stands erect amid every storm. We are in the home of the Vikings who feared no foe; and among the compatriots of those undaunted warriors there is none in modern times who embodies their spirit more than that fearless, faithful fighter, Henrik Ibsen.

Though he possessed no Norwegian ancestry, he is the incarnation of the characteristics of those roving warriors of former days, who sheathed the sword in dread of none and who pushed their prows wherever fancy dictated. Endowed with an imagination teeming with poetic power, gifted with keen insight heightened by rare honesty, possessing analytic powers of first rank, Henrik Ibsen, living in the land of the long day and the long night, became a censor of morals, a critic of outrageous

custom, a denouncer of "windy shams and sentimentalities." He brought to mankind a self-revelation which few have excelled, and to fulfill his purpose he required the courage of a warrior and the daring of the sea-king. He lay bare the weak spots in a conventional civilization, and through all he was inspired by an essential optimism which every leader of man must possess if the pillars of society are not to be shaken by the critic who may otherwise appear to be an enemy of the people.

Born for a Mission.

Henrik Ibsen was born on the 20th of March, 1828, and remained a visitor on this terrestrial globe for seventy-eight years. During the period of his pilgrimage he saw life in every phase, from penury to plenty, from difficulty to distinction, from abasement to aggrandizement, from horror to honor. He was bound by chains of adverse circumstance, and alone and unaided he broke the fetters from off his own body and strove to remove the shackles from a contemptible and contemptuous society. He saw beneath the surface and it was his delight to drag the hypocrite and fawner into the limelight of derision. He was a born satirist, a psychologist of morbid types. He flayed conventionality. With the rod of his mouth he smote the earth and with the breath of his lips he slew wickedness. He was born with a mission, and though, like many another prophet, at the beginning of his career he was timid, shy and retiring, he soon found himself, and fearlessly and courageously he endured to the end,

winning the esteem of his enemies and the support of the society he had satirized.

The State Into Which He Was Born.

Norway, at the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, had scarcely felt the growing impulse toward progress which was beginning to move Western Europe. The sciences which have added so much to our physical comforts and developed so much of our industrial life were little known in that land swept by the frozen breezes of the icy north. The vast improvements introduced by the application of steam to industry made slow inroads in that country of "one long day and one long night." The ologies and osophies which have added so much to the sum of human knowledge were but little known among Ibsen's people. He saw smug self-satisfaction masking as progress. He observed parochialism parading as statesmanship. He realized that religion as understood by the people of Norway in his day was nought but a barren ceremonialism. He noticed everywhere that society was bound in chains by artificial conventions. He, therefore, became the exponent of a liberty little understood and, therefore, bitterly denounced; for to him personality, individuality, counted for more than all the mediocre virtues of petty and prudish provincialism.

Rough Outlines of Ibsen's Life.

But we must not proceed too rapidly. To understand how he arrived at the discovery of himself and his life's work we must follow the story of his life in, at

least, a few broad details. His mother was a German. His father, a man of Danish, Scotch and Germany ancestry, was a man who seems to have inherited little of the thriftiness associated with these nationalities. When Ibsen was a mere child his father failed in business stupidly squandering his means. As a consequence Henrik received but little schooling and even his favorite hope to become an artist was frustrated because of the family's poverty. When the lad was fifteen years old he left his father's house to go to the dreary village of Grimstad as apprentice to a druggist, with whom he remained for about six years. He found little satisfaction in his occupation and found himself drawn more to art and literature than to chemistry and medicine. By the time he reached his legal majority two-thirds of his life had been spent in grinding poverty. At the time that most youths have determined upon a career, Ibsen found himself facing a world yet to be conquered, while he was "excruciatingly poor" and without friends, means or profession.

His Restless Spirit.

One fact he had discovered,—nature had not qualified him to be a scientist. He had not been endowed with the fundamental tendencies out of which the man of science arises. The scientist must be content to sit with weaponed eye to gaze upon objects infinitesimally small or infinitely far and great. The scientist must be willing to wait, making observations which require the virtues of patience and persistent watching. The scientist must be prepared to sit alone in laboratory or observ-

atory, enduring the silence of the long watches of the night or the isolation which comes during periods of research throughout the day. Now Ibsen was a restless spirit, like his forefathers, many of whom had been sea-rovers. He could not sit still. We read that he had to be moving and that when he had become an author after having written a few passages he would take his pipe, button up his coat, put his hands behind him and wander about his room.

Life in Bergen.

Life looked dreary and uninviting,—like unto his own country in the dark period of winter,—when he decided upon a career. The opportunity came when, through the friendly interest of Ole Bull, he was offered the position of "stage poet" to the theater in Bergen. This gave him, in return for his services as a sort of assistant dramatic adviser and author, a small income and a traveling allowance. During the six years of his association with the Bergen Theatre he was enabled to visit Copenhagen and Dresden in the interest of the drama, and to essay to produce some plays most of which were, however, only experiments in the playwright's art. It was during this period, however, that he wrote "Lady Inger of Ostrat," a play later deemed worthy to be published among his important works.

In Christiania.

Though his means were slender he married when he was 28 years old, and this proved to be the most fortu-

nate and successful of all his undertakings. He says of his life-companion, "She was just the very woman for me," and in his most trying times she was his ever faithful friend and uncomplaining consort. The engagement at Bergen ended in 1856 and Ibsen accepted a call to Christiania, where he became director of the Norwegian Theatre. He retained this position until the theatre closed in 1862, when its proprietors went bankrupt. For the next couple of years living was precarious, yet during that time he issued two plays of genuine merit, "Love's Comedy," and "The Pretenders," neither of which succeeded in gaining for him the place to which he was entitled by his splendid ability. His soul had flowered in words of rare beauty and his mind had given birth to children, as worthy of respectful consideration as his only son and heir Sigurd was of the love of his father and mother. Still appreciation came not. He found no favor in the eyes of the people whom he wished to awaken from their sluggish idolatries and selfishly smug respectability.

The Bee With a Sting.

It is possible to grow a plant for a few days in spite of a lack of sunshine; it may thrive and finally reach maturity even though the bright light and warmth of the sun have been withdrawn; but no plant kept without light and heat for the greater part of its life will reach a fine and full fruition. It is possible to use a man for a brief period and withhold from him the marks of appreciation which his merits have rightfully earned; but it is impossible to persist in this attitude of unrequited affec-

tion for a period indefinitely long without morally injuring the man's character, without, in some way, distorting his views, without, in some way, forcing upon his mind impressions which will result in oblique reflections. Possibly Ibsen, had he received, as it were, the kiss of love and the pressure of affection's hand from the public he strove to serve, would have blossomed into the warm-hearted poet like his great contemporary Byornson. For both of them were literary bees gathering honey from every flower; but while the former yielded only honey, the latter gave forth honey and likewise a sharp sting.

The Resisting Satirist.

Thus it fell out that, when Ibsen had almost reached half the measure of his life, he was an unloved and unappreciated man. We may ask ourselves why this should have been. The reason is not hard to seek. Ibsen was a reformer. He knew that his countrymen were suffering from untold ills,—political, social, economic, religious,—and though to many he seems to have been a pessimist, he optimistically believed that these ills were not incurable, though years might pass before they would be removed. Moreover, he felt that he was God-appointed to fight these evils and to employ for this purpose the weapons which had been granted to him by a kindly Providence. Had he come with a sweet society bow and smile; had he been willing uncomplainingly to submit to the conventional lies which were being lived on all sides; had he consented to submit instead of to resist, he might have been received with open arms by a society which

loves flattery in place of truth and complacency instead of honesty.

The Fate of the Reformer.

But Ibsen possessed the soul of the reformer, and the reformer cannot be like other men, nor live like other men. He is God-ordained to be unlike others, not to be like them. The reformer has faith; men have no faith, or little faith. The reformer dies that others may live; others live and, while living, slay without pity or remorse. The reformer lies down, if need be, that others may stamp him under foot; others refuse to make a single sacrifice of a convenience, not to speak of their lives. The reformer mounts the scaffold as kings ascend their thrones. The reformer may die, but he cannot and will not lie, even to gain the protection and plaudits of the masses. For the reformer knows that when he is dead he will still live, while others are dead though they think themselves alive. The reformer says that though men may kill him they cannot kill his ideas. With such views the reformer is ever out of harmony with his environment. Stolid and indifferent to the world's praise or blame, he presses onward and forward and upward, laughing or sneering at the world, or condemning and criticizing, yet guiding, it, and prepared to die for it.

Forth With Exile's Staff.

In the year 1864, poor, unloved of the world he served, with no possessions save the graces of mind and heart with which God had endowed him and the faithful wife and the growing child, he left Norway, to return

only when appreciation came. He says, speaking of the attitude of the Norwegians toward him,

> "My people, who on me the exile's staff,
> With sorrow's scrip and sandals swift for roaming,
> Bestowed,—the outfit stern for strife completing."

Small grants of money were made which enabled the rising poet and dramatist to travel, and thus it happened that he visited some of the great cities of Europe, notably Rome, which he learned to love. The Norwegian Parliament, or Storthing, expressed but little sympathy for him, and the attitude of the legislators, in whose power it was to relieve him from grinding poverty, moved him to the quick.

But no one was more to blame for the opposition than Ibsen himself; for, in his earliest writings he had satirized the very men to whom he now looked for consideration and courtesy. He had felt disappointed at the failure of Norway to come to the rescue of Denmark in 1864 after all the protestations of friendship, and the indifference of his countrymen to what he conceived to be a sacred international cause evoked his bitterest diatribes. He shook the dust of his country from off his shoes and made his way to Italy. For nearly thirty years he refused to settle in the land of his birth, and when, in 1891, he made his home in Christiania, after several years' residence in Rome and Munich and Dresden, he had become recognized as a world character with sure and lasting recognition of his supreme ability as a poet and a playwright.

Begins Serious Dramatic Efforts.

Shortly after taking up his residence in Italy, he began to undertake the literary work which has gained for him an enduring place among the dramatists of the nineteenth century. Although he was living in most straitened circumstances, although poverty furrowed his brows and hollowed his cheeks, he could not but follow the inward appeal of the spirit of the Muse. His plays began to appear and with them came a grant from the Storthing, so that soon he became relieved from the carking cares of penury. His works produced a revenue which liberated him from every form of oppressive distress which had hitherto hampered him. Henceforth he was free to travel as and where he desired. Play after play appeared and every form of desirable recognition came. His name was writ large upon the tablets of the nation's appreciation. His publications, however, were always bitterly criticized. His foes, and they were numerous, delighted in deriding the man who held up to derision the foibles of his compatriots and the weaknesses of his fellowmen. Like unto the prophet, Ibsen struggled long and wearily before distinction was attached to his name. He long remained without honor in his country though received everywhere else as a man of rare genius.

Wins Fame's Laurel.

Nothing could dampen his moral courage or deaden his mental vigor. He still struggled bravely on, determined to wring from the lips and pens of the Norwegians a complete expression of their recognition of his supreme

ability. Honors finally came. In Christiania a public celebration was held in honor of his seventieth birthday, and a year later, in the same city, a statue was erected outside the leading theatre, thus honoring him as Molière is honored in Paris, where his statue adorns the exterior of the Comedie Francaise. He lived to reach the ripe old age of seventy-eight, and when he died, only eight years ago, he had already been placed by common consent among the immortals of the nineteenth century. During the first half of his life he struggled against an adverse fate. He failed to receive at the hands of his fellows the meed of respect to which he was justly entitled. He dragged his soul to the heights through the long and weary lanes of poverty and want. But he mounted his Pegasus, nevertheless; and at his death in 1906 he was hailed as a Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Schiller.

An Estimate of the Man.

As a student of universal literature I have never been able to feel that Ibsen is to be compared with these geniuses, the like of whom no other nation has, with but very few exceptions, thus far produced. For, Shakespeare is a human argosy which sailed every sea and touched every shore, revealing every nook and corner, every bay and inlet, of every human experience, mental, moral and spiritual. Goethe is a Himalaya range,—gleaming, brilliant, cloud-piercing, sky-reaching. Schiller is an Italy,—warm, genial, full of light and color. Ibsen is a Norway, the land of one long day and one long night,

rugged, contrasty, precipice-like, yet withal, upright as the pine and lofty as the mountain. It may seem that this comparison is unfavorable in the eyes of his present-day worshippers; yet even one like myself, possessing none of Ibsen's qualifications and qualities, dare confess my own impressions. Immodest as it may seem for a humble and incompetent critic to pass an opinion, I feel that immodesty lies not in the opinion, but in venturing an opinion without having read a man's writings or having pondered his utterances. The truthful expression of a conviction is never immodest; we are only immodest when we permit prejudice to sway our minds, or cloak our ignorance with phrases which have no semblance of verity. We would we were an Ibsen even though we do not feel that Ibsen was a Shakespeare or a Goethe or a Schiller.

Ibsen rendered an undying service in his effort to unmask hypocrisy, to remove the rouge and paint from the cheeks of a hypocritical set in society, and to deride the pretensions of the self-satisfied, the complacent, and the formal, among mankind. He dived into the depths. He sought to place upon the canvas of human imagination a picture of the evils wrought by the unbalancing of the pillars of society,—truth and freedom.

Conditions to Be Opposed.

There are many of us who go through life as cheerful optimists, who find no fault with the age in which we live and who see no evil on earth which cannot be immediately remedied without seriously questioning the spirit

of the age. They feel that not only is this world the best possible world, but the prevailing conditions are also the best possible. Such regard everyone who desires to effect remedial changes as an enemy of the people; a foe to the established order. For those who hold such opinions honestly we may have great respect, but we beg to differ from them none the less.

None of us can quite see things exactly as others do. We may have a Hamlet-like sense of politeness which leads us to agree with the Poloniuses, and assent that pressing problems are "like a camel," or "like a weasel," or "very like a whale," and in our desire not to wound the susceptibilities of the malefactor we may charitably veil our language. But we are liars, nevertheless; and though we defend the liar by defining the term in Bostonese as "one who indulges in mendacity," he remains a violator of the truth just the same. Big words may hurt no bones, but no good purpose is served by hiding the truth under the mantle of verbosity or indirection. Ibsen knew this and created foes because he was a servant of the truth.

The thoughtless optimist is happy because life has brought him the fulfilment of his hopes, because he has been able to take advantage of opportunity, because he has, perhaps, been able to improve upon opportunity, or because a wealthy father happened to die before him and leave the product of his toil and ability to one who, like the lilies of the field, "toils not, neither does he spin." There are those who are perfectly satisfied with the pre-

vailing social order and regard with distrust and dislike those who urge even the slightest change. Why? Because the *status quo* has enabled them to realize their dreams of power and place. He who measures success in life by material things is gratified and satisfied when fortune comes to him; but what of him who, adopting the same standard, finds no such fulfilment of his hopes? He who gauges intellectual success by a university standard and is content with gaining a degree may, perhaps, be satisfied when, on graduating, he receives the chancellor's endorsement; but what of him who indulges the same ambition yet finds himself denied, because of physical or economic reasons, the opportunity of aspiring to his ideal? Those who dig and delve into life's mines may rest content if they strike oil or discover gold; but what of those who, willing to play the game of life according to well-accepted rules, to whom God has given fine temperament and soul-qualities, yet hunger for that which they can never obtain, and who, under present-day conditions cannot gain that toward which their eyes righteously turn and for which their hearts honestly yearn?

The Truly Great Are the Great Misunderstood.

The man who lays his hand, gently or roughly, on these conditions, to the end that they be changed, or who, in his righteous indignation, flays the respectable sins which are responsible for so much corruption, is apt to be misunderstood and misrepresented. In all probability, he will be opposed by the few who succeed and by the many who fail. The many do not comprehend, because

the prophet of the new era has already mentally traveled miles and miles ahead of their own position. The few who do understand realize how dangerous to their views are the doctrines he preaches, and, therefore, deftly and unscrupulously, their hired agents distort the issue so that the many shall hate and distrust him as much as do the few.

This was Ibsen's unfortunate position. Those who understood him hated and feared him, while those who did not understand the esoteric meaning of his message were made to regard him as an irreconcilable foe who criticized their idols, sneered at their foibles and laughed at their impious piety. Did those entrenched in power not like him because he derided their honestly acquired possessions? Oh, no! No reformer worthy of the name has ever desired to rob men of their honest and righteous gains. Ibsen knew that society has ever been cursed with its loan-sharks, its villains, its commercial prostitutes, who, buttressed by absurd legislation, have fleeced the people while pretending to befriend them; who, while acting within the law of the state, have made sport of the law of God; men legally honest, but morally thieves. The man, in any land or age, who holds that class, and it is ever large and influential, up to scorn, will not escape unhurt; and Ibsen suffered their fate.

Denounced the Religious Sham.

He saw that religion, as popularly understood and practiced, was a sham and a delusion. He heard people

praying in the churches, "Thy will be done." He knew that they did not mean it. He understood that the people "honored God with their lips but their heart was from Him," and therefore he smote them with the rod of his lips and rebuked them in his hot displeasure. He heard the pastor praying, "God be merciful unto us, weak and miserable sinners;" but when the same preacher pointed his finger at one of this class and said, "Thou art the man," the rebuke was bitterly resented, and immediate steps were taken to silence the honest teacher of men. He heard the clergy fulminating against the sins and vices and crimes of social life; but he observed that, as the congregation left the church, members would say, "Didn't the minister hit so and so hard this morning?" For thus ever act those whom the minister intends to reprove: they endeavor to ward off criticism from themselves by indicating someone else as the target of the minister's reproof.

Now Ibsen was the teacher who said to the congregation who read his works, "Whenever a man says 'Didn't the minister hit so and so hard this morning?' be sure the speaker is the object of the clergyman's rebuke." Men hated him because he gave their hand away. He heard men and women who, in their appeals to God, spoke of Him as their Father and of mankind as their brethren, yet in their hearts there dwelt hate and prejudice and envy, and in their daily lives there was no semblance of godliness. He noticed that wealth had often been gained by inequity and power by iniquity, and he

smote with the rod of his lips all wickedness,—a needed duty, but a thankless task.

Denounced the Social Vices.

He was deeply disturbed by the existence of social vices. He saw that women ruined their husbands by their inconsiderateness, and that, just as often, men ruined their wives by oppressive custom and unequal laws. He regretted that women should have been educated as dolls and that, as a consequence, they resided in dolls' houses when their abodes should have been ample and broad. He was touched to the quick when he realized how many individuals carry through life the consequences of the sins of their ancestors, and he portrayed, in language quivering with intense earnestness, the ghosts of past sins which "will not down." For, he dared to call men and women to account for their idolatries and adulteries; and he courageously denounced those who, by their sins, had stored up in blood and bone and nerve the evil tendencies which, later on, would by natural processes be conveyed into the nerve and bone and blood of their innocent children. We are not enamoured of those who chide us for our faults; we hate those who denounce us for our sins. Hence Ibsen's unhappy fate; for, understanding so well the falsity, the meanness, the pettiness, the insincerity, of certain social types, he held them up to public scorn and became rewarded by their enmity and opposition.

Denounced Social Immorality.

He observed the inequities of social life as they

touched woman's development. He understood how, in a man-made society, it had been possible for man to rob woman of her real inheritance under the pretence of protecting her. He believed that woman is largely to blame for this unfortunate state of affairs, and that she is her own worst foe. In the first place, women have never banded themselves together in defence of their rights. It appeared to him possible for woman to insist upon rejecting the man of low morals as man rejects the woman of that class; but he found that woman protests against her fallen sister and rejects the Marguerites while she is proud to be won by the sinning man, eagerly accepting the attentions of the Fausts. In the second place, he saw the secret freemasonry among men which women have never learned. Women are nearer to nature than men, and the primitive passions of the human species are more easily stirred in woman than in the male. He opened the eyes of women to this fact, but the lethargy which seeks the path of least resistance was moved to opposition of his views.

Denounced the Economic Sins of Society.

He gazed upon the economic wrongs of society and emptied upon them the vials of his wrath. He saw how poverty was not a vice, but how, nevertheless, it robs men of their liberties. He denied that poverty was a consequence of the law of God, and declared it be the result of men's imperfect social laws. He knew that the Scriptures had said that "the poor have ye with you always," but he objected to the emphasis placed upon the word

"always." The poor will be with us always as long as the present economic system prevails; but he felt that God had commissioned him to be the spokesman of a better social order, a nobler conception of justice, than the world has yet dreamed of, or has yet been able to institute. We shall best be able to understand his purpose if we give heed to the message of the plays he wrote.

Ibsen's Plays.

These plays fall naturally into four classes,—the religious plays, the social plays, the psychological plays, and the mystical plays. Under the first head we find such a work as the "Emperor and Galilean." In the second group may be placed his works, "The Pillars of Society," "The Doll's House," "Ghosts," "An Enemy of the People," "Rosmersholm," "The Wild Duck." His psychological plays include "The Lady From the Sea," "Hedda Gabler," "The Master Builder," and "Little Eyolf." The last set contains "John Gabriel Borkman," and "When We Dead Awaken."

Ibsen Denounced as a Pessimist.

If Ibsen was a pessimist we shall, by discussing his works discover what manner of a pessimist he was. He who scorns the present condition in the belief that its evils are permanent and enduring may be a pessimist. But he who derides the wrongs of today in the belief that they are remediable and curable may sound like a pessimist but possesses the soul of the true optimist. Nothing is more certain than that the world is ruled by names and

terms and phrases, and that the unthinking mass of mankind permits itself to be led astray by the glib phrases by which entrenched power and sceptred might divert from itself the destructive fate which should be meted out to it.

The World Ruled by Names.

Let us see! It is well known that "if we give a dog a bad name we may as well hang it." Give a good thing a bad name and the masses will howl at it. Give a bad thing a good name and the crowd will adore it. Men have so long said, "as rich as a Jew," that they have come to believe that every Jew is rich. If there is so much wealth among the Jews I should like to know where it may be found. The institutions I represent are all of them in need of funds, and thus far I have found very, very few who have ever given large sums, or are able to do so, in support of our many philanthropic and charitable and religious undertakings. I know my people about as well as most of us, and I am stating the truth when I say that, in all probability, ninety per cent of all the Jews in the world scarcely know where the money will come from to buy them a week's food. This is the truth of the matter, yet it is calmly and assuredly stated "as rich as a Jew." Some day the world will understand that the Carnegies, the Phippses, the Morgans, the Rockefellers, can easily buy out not only the Jews of their communities but all the Jews in the United States; for as a people the Jews are poor. But the phrase has been used so long that people are astonished when I urge that men ought to say "as poor as a Jew," and not "as rich as a Jew."

Again; we employ the phrase, "in times of peace be prepared for war." A few weeks ago one of the New York papers asked me to express my opinion in a dozen words or so on the discussion then being held concerning an increase of armaments for our country. I was asked, "Don't you think that peace will be better assured for America if we are prepared for war?" I replied, "No. Europe was prepared for war and she got what she was prepared for." I feel that, if in times of peace, we prepare to make peace more lasting, nay, perpetual, we shall also get what we are preparing for. For decades Germany was preparing the strongest army while England was developing the strongest navy. Today they and their allies are working overtime; but so obsessed have we become, because of the phrase "in times of peace prepare for war," that no obstacle to world peace is greater than the state of mind which has resulted from the pernicious doctrine that we must increase armaments if we desire peace.

Pessimism and Optimism.

But why increase illustrations? The truth ought to be patent to all. We use phrases so long that we utter them from our lips out, expressing no real conviction by our words. They become prejudices, not arguments. So is it with the term "pessimist." Is a man a pessimist because he takes a sombre view of prevailing conditions? Is a man a pessimist because he is not contented when he sees around him conditions which should be remedied? Is a surgeon a pessimist when he gives his deliberate

judgment in favor of removing a gangrened organ of the human body? Is the physician a pessimist who prescribes a complete change of diet or insists that his patient must take bitter medicine? On the contrary, since they suggest remedial measures they write themselves down optimists.

The greatest optimists the world has ever known were the Prophets of Israel. When we read the utterances of the greatest optimist of them all, the prophet Isaiah, we find that he did not hesitate to tell his people that their hands were covered with blood, that they were smothered with the putrefying sores of injustice. The noble company of the prophets did not fear to tell the people of Israel that they loved bribes, that they perverted the cause of the poor and the righteous, that they were guilty of the grossest immorality and that they "refused to receive correction, making their faces harder than a rock."

If like an undisciplined mustang we take the bit in our mouths and say, "We are good enough. We shall go our own way. We need no prophet to tell us our duty. We are just as good as our would-be reprover." Ah, then, indeed, we shall call the prophet a pessimist and deprive his words of value. But, if we realize our duty to our offspring we shall realize that he who rebukes us is our lover, and he who flatters us is our foe. For, it is a thousand times better to listen to the reproof of a wise man than to receive the kiss of a fool. The enemy hates

us and proves it by his flattery; the friend loves us and proves it by his ministration of honest correction.

Ibsen the Candid Friend.

Ibsen was the candid friend whom the Norwegians hated because he spoke the truth. Even today he is, in many places, denounced as a pessimist, especially by those who would undermine his influence. It is a common form of criticism to say that "his play left a bad taste behind." But the truth hurts and he who, like Ibsen, is a consistent friend of the truth is apt to be handled unkindly by those he desires to help. Such was ever the fate of the prophet. Yet Ibsen was not what his opponents have portrayed him to be. He was a serious optimist, like unto the world's spiritual leaders. This we shall find as we study him and endeavor to see how he strove for the realization of the "Third Empire," of which he speaks in "Emperor and Galilean,"—an ideal not unlike that of the Messiah to which we are pledged.

Ibsen's Motif Is Hope, Not Despair.

A dear friend wrote to me after hearing last week's address, "The Messiah is Socialism and Socialism is the Messiah." From time to time those interested in our discourses have communicated their ideas to me and have urged that the ideal condition is the antithesis of Socialism, or what is known as Philosophical Anarchism. Some are devoted to altruism, others to individualism. For myself, I believe that we shall find that a nice blending of both ideals will prove the best line of advance, and that

we shall reach Messianic conditions when an altruistic individualism sways our lives.

But of this we may be sure,—that as long as poverty exists, as long as avoidable disease is transmitted to the young, as long as the chasm between the classes is permitted to grow wider and deeper without a serious effort to lessen the breach, as long as religious intolerance prevails, as long as black bigotry rears its ugly head, as long as formalism takes the place of religion, as long as privilege robs men of the rightful products of their toil, as long as falsehood sits enthroned and orders truth to be crucified, as long as the idle rich suck the economic life-blood out of the dispossessed poor and flaunt their vulgarity before their victims, so long will it be necessary for someone to assert that the "Third Empire" is necessary; and he who thus hopes for Messianic conditions is not a croaking pessimist but a loyal and devoted optimist. The motif of Ibsen is hope, not despair.

Ibsen a Moral Surgeon.

If we belong to the type of individuals who turn giddy as we seek our way on the steep declivities of life, we must not read Ibsen. If we turn pale and faint at the sight of blood, we should not study him. If we cannot abide the odors which arise from decaying matter, we ought not ponder his works. Ibsen was a moral surgeon; he cut out the cancer from the healthful flesh it sought to destroy. He was an excavator, and if his work took him into sewers it was not that he delighted in work-

ing in drains, but because he wished to open the putrid matter to the pure air so that it might be oxidized and clarified.

Ibsen was like a storm on a summer day. The black and lowering clouds gather; the lightnings flash; the wind, increasing in force, rends the welkin which empties the welcome shower. We flee from nature in her manifestation of anger; but when the storm is over, the sun again shines, nature revives, our oppressed spirits are lightened, the earth has been enriched, the air is purified, and all life rejoices. No man in our day has better described these two phases of human nature than he. He loves the contrast. He gives us, for instance, Brand, the type of self-denial; but he also portrays for us Peer Gynt, the type of self-indulgence. In his works he enables us to see the workings of the human passions and bares for us the consequences of men's mistakes.

If, then, you wish to see the evils of society exposed; if you care to behold the human soul standing naked in its splendor and misery; if you are fond of listening to the words of a candid friend who means well by you; if you believe that man, in spite of his heredity, can rise above the corpse of his former self; if you believe that there is a place in this world for faith, hope, mercy, progress; then let us spend a few weeks together and consider the writings of Henrik Ibsen, the poet and dramatist, the servant of man.

HENRIK IBSEN

II. Brand and Peer Gynt,—A Contrast.*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy xxx.

I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. (Deuteronomy xxx., 19).

Observation shows that two differing views of man are held by different persons. According to some he is a child of the dust; according to others he is a child of Deity. He is an ape or an angel, a product of things earthly or heavenly, in proportion to our materialistic or idealistic manner of thought.

Differing Views of Man and His End.

In the same way there are two views of the grave. It is either a blind alley, a hole in the ground into which we place dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes; or it is an entrance to a conservatory into which we commit the bulb which flourishes as a flower in realms beyond our vision or imagination. Similarly we may conceive of

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

death, for two views are commonly held concerning it. Either it is the end of all living, or it is the beginning of a new life.

The Higher View Accords With Lofty Souls.

If a beast could speak and we were to ask it for its views concerning man, the grave, and death, it would unhesitatingly give the lower view. Were we to consult an uneducated, unspiritual, uncontrolled individual called, on account of his shape, a man, we would, probably, hear from him opinions which would be in harmony with the views of the beast; for, denying the spiritual origin of man, he is compelled, by the logic of the case, to regard man as the highest beast, although he demands for himself the attention due to an angel. Were we to ask the cultured yet unreligious person his opinions on the subject of man, the grave, and death, he would probably reply, "I have reverently investigated, I have pondered and I find that I know little and am compelled to accept much on the authority of the teachers of men. Of the hereafter I know nothing; of the here and now I believe that some such statement as Micah's rule of life is sufficient; of man's origin I find no record other than that he is an animal with noble endowments which bind him to the obligation of moral endeavor."

The Religious View.

If we were to request one of the highest types of manhood to tell us frankly what views he holds of man, of the grave, and of death, he would probably reply, "It

is my firm conviction that man is a child of God created in the image of the Eternal and responsible to God for the use made of life; that man is an individual soul whose glory is that it can scale all heights and tear down all opposition, and is ready at any time to die for a conviction; that to him life is only a passing moment, while eternity was before he came on earth and will be after he has passed away.'' The genuinely religious person will affirm that as nothing is lost in the realms of physical nature so nothing is ever lost in the spiritual world; that what is is forever; that what is may change and undergo, Proteus-like, myriads of transformations, but destroyed it cannot be.

The Spiritual Ideal of Life.

Because we do not see with the physical eye that which the religious devotee may believe, we are not necessarily within the sphere of exact truth when we refuse to believe. During our last visit to Paris my wife and I spent some time with one of the most spiritual-minded women it has ever been my pleasure to know. She is the Vice-President of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in Paris. In conversation one day when she happened to be speaking of her grandchildren's religious development she remarked, ''I am not surprised that so many persons have no sympathy with the spiritual life. Before we acquire real reverence for it we must die and be born again on earth, and die and be re-born and again die and be born again; and we who have caught a glimpse of the higher and better life differ from others in that we have died

and been re-born more often than they.'' This may be, possibly, just as good a suggestion as any hitherto offered in explanation of the advanced types of men and women with whom we meet and of those ennobling ideals which they express by their lives.

Two Views of Life.

There are, therefore, two views of life,—one expressed by the term restraint and the other by the word culture. In the one case we find life's ideal to be self-denial, self-surrender, self-immolation, self-abnegation, self-renunciation, self-crucifixion,—an ideal indulged, for instance, during the monastic era of early Christianity. In the other case it is found to be self-indulgence, self-expression, self-realization, such as we have ever seen on the Great White Ways and Boulevards of the world of pleasure. There are two views of life, of which the harlot represents one and the nun the other. These are extreme types, I admit, but they express the limits of the two patterns after which most of us fashion our lives,—the model of virtue and also of vice.

The Necessity for an Ideal.

If progress is to be achieved we must have an ideal which represents that which is higher and better and nobler than we are ourselves. In the closing portion of Faust, Marguerite, who represents the Mater Gloriosa, calls to him she would save, ''Come up higher!'' In the soul of every living being a voice constantly cries, ''Come up higher! Come up higher!'' What the height to be

reached depends upon the ideal we indulge. Each must determine for himself whether he is to be an ideal worshipper or an idol worshipper. Scripture was right when it said, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore choose!" In the last analysis each of us must make his own selection; we must choose for ourselves.

Indeed, that is what we have already done. By the time we reach the age of twelve years or so, the average person has already chosen the path which leads to life or death. Tendencies have already been developed which will play a most important part in the determination of our life. The seed of good or evil habits has already taken root, and the environment which we shall, in all probability, select will serve to foster those traits which direct us toward the path of least resistance. Thus, in the generality of cases, our whole future is determined by the choice of ideal or idol, of blessing or curse, which we make very early in life. I am far from denying that there are cases in which the adult seems to be able to overthrow the influence of these early years, but the instances are rare where one, the twig of whose tree has already received an inclination in life's first decade, is competent to straighten it out completely in later years.

The Results of Early Influences.

Into the ears of childhood words are poured which find the little one "wax to receive and marble to retain." Speak to the young of money, for instance; tell it in the

earliest years of its life that money is the one thing needful; let your speech contain constant references to the supposed good which money, in and of itself, represents; and when the child becomes a man you will usually discover that he is a money-worshipper. Discuss in the first few years of a child's impressionable life the value of fame, power, position, place; let the little one hear that only the mighty are the successful; let it see its parents daily worshipping at the shrine of might; and the child when an adult will be, in all probability, an advocate of force as the ultimate expression of human destiny.

During the formative period of human character let the child hear its elders discourse on the permanent value of human and humane public service; let it observe its parents devoting a fair proportion of their time, means and abilities to the solution of the difficult problems which confront us, and it is most likely that, from amid that mental and moral environment, a really useful member of society will ultimately emerge. If we place our young within the sphere of influence of godly men and women as its teachers, or bring it under the sway of the writings of the world's moral and spiritual uplifters, can there be any doubt but, in the course of time, the little soul will expand and develop into a finer product than that of the child whose spiritual feelings and powers have been dwarfed by inattention, and whose life has been untouched by the suggestions of goodness and godliness?

If the sum total of a mother's influence has been to develop a human fashion plate, what kind of a woman

can we hope to find in later years than a gay and giddy thing, a menace to a society which depends for its security on justice and equity and knowledge and truth and pity and love? If the resultant of a father's power with his children has been to make them adorers of comfort and luxury, of idleness and pleasure, what shall later years produce for us except the spendthrift and gambler, the sybarite and lotus-eater, the pleasure-seeker and idler, who are a constant source of danger to a community whose very existence is threatened by these immoral undesirables?

As a consequence of neglect in the earliest years of the child's life, weeds grow where valuable products should be found. As a result of an environment of crass materialism and gross indulgence we find to this day those who seek flattery and inspire contempt, but who never yearn for the word of truth. On the other hand, early impressions of the better order have given us types of individuals who willingly take the path which leads to trial and difficulty, joyously undertaken for the benefit of the multitudes. The revelations of soul power made by these glorious sons and daughters of man are still mighty enough to guide all of us who come under their sphere of influence. We may not be able to climb to the heights reached by them, but the fragrance of their lives still charms and enriches ours.

Man Is a Dualism.

The reason for these opposite tendencies in mankind, resulting as they almost always do from the influence of

heredity and environment, may be found in the fact that man is a dualism. He is a product of two elements. He is body and soul. In each of us is a mixture of earth and heaven. Scripture tells us that, in the beginning, God said, "Let us make man in our image!" Jewish theologians interpret this portion of the wondrous ode to creation found in the first chapter of Genesis as an appeal of God to nature as though He meant, "Let us, nature and God, together make man in the image of each of us; you, nature shall provide man with the physical elements of his body, and I, God, will breathe into him My spirit." This is only poetry, but it is poetry of the very highest order. Thus each of us is mind and matter. We are physical and spiritual.

In the same tiny cloud of dust which is built by natural forces into the creature called man, there enters the spirit of Him who created the universe and who controls it by His supreme will. Thus the creature, man, becomes a different entity from any other animal. Man becomes the child of God endowed with what we call a soul. We shall not quarrel about terms, but in man there is a divine quality which we call the soul, the spiritual power which is his highest gift, which permits him to sit at banquets yet causes him to rise dissatisfied or unsatisfied; which opens its wings and soars to the supreme heights of self-consecration to the ideal; which folds its wings in reverence before the marvelous manifestations of the Infinite and the Eternal; which defies death and conquers the grave; which seeks the light of the sun and brings it to earth for the benefit of mortals. Child of

Deity and dust is man; product of earth and heaven; brother of animal and angel, is he! Hence it follows that in proportion as we listen to the call of the earth we take the lower view of life; and in proportion as we heed the appeal of God, revealed to us through His chosen prophets, we follow the nobler course.

Ibsen's Treatment of This Dualism.

I think it was Ibsen's recognition of this dualism which led him to write the two plays, or dramatic poems, to which we shall devote a brief consideration this morning. In them we find an elaboration of the two opposing forces in man to which I have just referred. On the one hand we have the morose and severe drama of "Brand," and on the other hand we have the fantastic play of "Peer Gynt." They are the contrasts resulting from the two views of life I have already endeavored to depict. In the one we find self-denial, a consecration to an austere ideal of law and duty; in the other we find self-realization, a devotion to an ideal of license and pleasure. Both of these creations of Ibsen's mind are extreme types, and both fail to find the fulfilment of their lives in the manner they anticipated. But they serve to indicate to us that the way of life is in neither direction, and that happiness and blessing must be found in other uses of our faculties than in those employed by Brand the puritan and preacher, and by Peer Gynt the man of pleasure.

His Personal Experience When Writing.

In reading these works of Ibsen we must remember

that at the time he wrote them he was passing through a very trying period of his life. Not only did he feel the painful pinch of poverty, but his sensitive nature had been outraged by the callousness of his countrymen to the fate of Denmark. The war of 1864 made a deep impression on his faithful soul. He apparently realized that Bismarck's fateful determination to conduct the three wars which would result in German unity had produced a soul-paralysis in his countrymen. He was ashamed of his nation. This feeling was intensified when he passed through suffering Copenhagen on his way to Italy, and when he saw the people in Berlin celebrating the victory over the Danes at Dybbol, shouting around the flags which they had brought in triumph to the capital, and actually spitting into "the cannon that received no help and yet went on shooting until they burst."

His Loathing of Cowardice.

His feeling of contempt for Norway was deepened when he saw the splendid sacrifices which Italy had brought in order to produce a united Italy. The idea grew in his mind that, if a man or a nation is to accomplish aught, the idea to be adopted is "All or Nothing." He resolved to teach this important truth to Norway in order that its children and children's children might never be guilty of the cowardice and faithlessness which his country had displayed in its desertion of Denmark in her day of need. He knew that such a presentation of the truth would hurt his chances with the Storthing, and, although dreadfully harassed by want and privation, he

refused to compromise with his soul. He wrote to Byornson at this time, "Hang me if I can or will, on that account, suppress a single line, no matter what these 'pocket-edition' souls think of it!"

His Disgust with Pietism.

Then, too, Ibsen was as dissatisfied with the church of his native land as with the state. Though he denies that he owes anything of the character of Brand to his objective experiences, the truth is that Ibsen was under the sway of the Pastor of Skien, one Lammers, who was a fierce combatant for a spiritual faith in opposition to the formal and lifeless religion accepted and lived by the Norwegians at that time. This pastor, Gustave Adolphe Lammers, laid the emphasis of religion on the inner life; whereas the people stressed the ceremonies, the creeds, the church services. The resulting conflict forced Lammers to leave Skien in disgust and to seek broader avenues for the opportunity of teaching religion. To the people pietism was all; without piety Lammers regarded religion as nothing. The moral power in Ibsen, which had enabled him to withstand the temptations to lie for the sake of gain, finds expression in "Brand" in which he flays his countrymen for their subservience to ritual and forms and ceremonies, and their unwillingness to live in the spirit of the founder of the religion to which they professed allegiance.

Sources of Ibsen's Characterizations.

There can also be little doubt but Ibsen was

through Lammers, under the influence of the philosopher Kierkegaard, who taught that "in the crucifixion of the human element lies man's sole chance of ultimate reconciliation and union with God." The theology current in Norway was incarnated in the teachings of this Soren Kierkegaard. It was the essence of the Calvinism which had found its way into the reformed church of Europe. It regarded the world as under a curse because of the anger of an offended God. It held that salvation in another life could only be obtained by the exercise of God's forgiveness through the saving grace of the crucified founder of Christianity. According to it only a small fraction of the human family was worthy of God's love. It offered no opportunity to man for the exercise of free-will. It came with blasts of damnation and the fires of Hell.

This philosophy possessed scarcely a saving feature: it assured the believer that he would be justified through the power of faith. In place of full and simple piety the people were satisfied with a lip-service which became exceedingly offensive to men of deep spiritual insight like Ibsen. In place of sacrifice the people offered church-dues. In place of mercy they brought creeds. Instead of sympathy and pity they gave the tribute of belief,—not the belief which stirs men to active piety, but the belief which begins and ends in mere words, in lifeless repetition of the articles of faith and the confession. Instead of brotherliness they insisted on brutal damnation for all who differed in forms of faith. To warn and to chastise, to advise and to inspire, Ibsen wrote this

dramatic poem, "Brand," which came forth hot from the forge of his imagination. It appeared glowing and burning and sizzling on the manuscript because of the contempt he had for his people's failings; and, perhaps, the saddest experience of his literary life was his discovery that the people "admired his book instead of understanding it," accepting it because its hero was a priest, instead of realizing that it "pointed a moral."

Scene Laid in Norway.

Whatever may have been the reception given to the play when it first appeared, time has enabled us to appreciate its value and to assign to it a high place among those works of man which seek to emphasize human responsibilities, and which endeavor to display for our consideration the struggle within the human breast of the opposing forces of animalism and the divine spirit in man. Although Ibsen is near Rome, in lovely Italy's loveliest groves, his mind turns to his own Norway, beloved in spite of the errors of his countrymen, and in this play, which gained for him international fame and a prominent place as a dramatist, he lays the plot amid the rugged and ice-bound valleys of his native land.

The neighborhood is not inviting. The glory of the sun appears but a few weeks in the year. Storm and snow, glacier and ghastliness, cliff and crag, foss and flood, offer little opportunity for the products of the soil to grow. The earth must be coaxed to yield even the least green thing. In such an environment the poor folk

are apt to be slavishly bound to the material world, their minds and souls as bare and unproductive as the earth itself. The leaders of the people are as blind as the people they attempt to direct. The great need is a man, one whom no obstacle can stay, whom no earthly power can overcome, whom no official can intimidate.

Brand the Puritan.

If such people are ever to improve, are ever to be awakened from their sluggishness and indifference, from their indolent self-sufficiency, none but a real man, whose motto is "All or Nothing," will be competent to serve. That man is Brand, a puritan of puritans, an uncompromising servant of his ideal, a teacher whose will must become the guiding influence of these men who shall yet be what God and nature have designed them to be. He is a veritable "father of souls," dissatisfied with things as they are, unsatisfied with things as the state would have them be, and only content with striving for things as they ought to be. He is the champion of conformity, a narrow, but strong, personality who determines that things shall be bent to his will.

The Character of Brand.

He displays this uncompromising attitude when first we meet him. He is accompanying a peasant to the bedside of his sick daughter. The path over the thin ice and the roar of hidden waters scare the peasant who would desist; but Brand proceeds, though tomorrow would serve as well as today. Even when the terrified father

seeks to prevent him, the courageous pastor hurls him down and goes forward.

Again he manifests the same resolute character when a dying man needs his services. In the fiord-side village famine stalks among the people, yet he sees no call for service among the starving people. He is only conscious of contempt for the officials, the Mayor and his clerks, whose narrow souls have no feeling for the poor who "do not live in their division." While the administrators of charity, devoid of all compassion, are handing minimum portions to the poor of their own parish, a woman rushes into their midst crying aloud for a pastor to absolve her husband, who, crazed with starvation, has killed their child and having attempted suicide "cannot live and dare not die."

His Heroic Self-Sacrifice.

Here, indeed, is work which he deems worthy. He must cross the fiord to reach the dying man and this he undertakes when all others refuse on account of the raging storm. "The Dean himself would put the service off," they say in reply to his demand "Unmoor the boat!" But who will guide it for him? Who else will take the risk of death in this hellish storm to serve another? Aye, who? The heroine, Agnes, is present. She hopes that Einar, who loves her, may respond to the call; but he is made of no such heroic stuff. His refusal slays her respect; while she, drawn toward the heroic element in Brand's nature, leaps into the boat amid the violent

protestations of all, and together pastor and girl reach the yonder shore in safety.

Invited to Be Pastor.

On his return the village folk urge him to be their priest. He has set himself a larger, nobler task, this crusading knight-errant of complete self-surrender and self-renunciation. His is to be the glory of "burying the God" worshipped by the fatuous people of the land who, in his eyes, has descended to the level of a broken idol. Agnes it is who wins him from the greater task, and for her sake he consents to remain in the village.

This heroine, when the play opened, was only a butterfly maiden; she is now a resolute woman. A real man was revealed to her in the journey over the roaring waters of the fiord. Einar her friend has become commonplace, a human ape simulating the character of a child of the Deity. Brand the strong-willed, courageous, heroic soul, has opened her eyes and conquered her heart. A boundless sea rolls between her and her former friend, and in spite of the warning and pleading that she is making her choice between stillness and strife, calm and fray, death and life, night and day, she selects Brand for her husband. Her answer is,

> "On through Death. On into Night.
> Dawn beyond glows rosy-bright."

All or Nothing.

Three years pass. A babe has come to bless their wedded life, but this morsel of bliss has, in no way, modi-

fied the priest's unyielding demand, "All or nothing." Every incident related only strengthens this impression. His mother lies dying, but he is deaf to her appeal for the administration of the last rites of her religion. She has not inspired her son with filial respect. On the night, just before his father died, Brand saw her hunting for the father's moneys and heard her grunt her dissatisfaction that there were not more. She had wedded for money and had sold her soul for money, and conscious of her own failing she had given her son to the church for the sole purpose of feeling certain of a priest's ministrations at the time of her death. Now that she is dying the son refuses to go to her. She must give up all her ill-gotten gain, all for which she has sold her soul. Messengers come to plead with him and offer, in her name, the bargain she will make. For she will give for consecrated purposes a half, yea nine-tenths, of all she has. The son is immovable. His answer is "All or nothing."

Brand's Unyielding Attitude.

His own child sickens in the sunless valley, and he is momentarily tempted to remove his home; but having, at the solicitation of Agnes, decided to remain in the village, he practically forces her to choose the way. Again the answer is "All or nothing." He must stay lest some less consecrated man come to take his place, even though to remain may mean "the sacrifice of their Isaac." The child dies and Brand in his merciless pietism has no sympathy for the mother-love, the description of which makes our hearts to quiver with pity. On

Christmas eve Agnes places a candle in the window so that its gleam may fall on the babe's little grave; Brand compels her to draw the curtain. There must be no indulgence in memories of the past which will seduce her from her resolution, "All or nothing." She must not even retain a cherished article which may remind her of the joys of the former Christmas. When the poor gypsy comes upon them and pleads for clothing for her child, Agnes ungrudgingly gives everything except one little relic,—the babe's cap lying in her bosom. Even this Brand forces the heart-broken mother to surrender. His cruel pietism knows no compromise,—"All or nothing." Agnes yields, but in that act plants the seed of death which soon overtakes her.

The Larger Church.

With the money he had inherited from his mother he builds a new church, larger, more beautiful, symbolic of the law he had made his guiding principle. The church attracts the multitudes who look on its builder as some saint; but they fail to understand his meaning. They are as steadfast to their commonplace creeds as he is to his fanatical pietism. With them the form and the rite are still of utmost importance; their unimaginative souls can no more dream of the graces and virtues of religion than can his resolute mind conceive of true piety and tender pity. He resolves to test the sincerity of the congregation as he had tried his wife. They, too, must be prepared to offer "All or nothing."

Failure.

Totally misunderstanding the limitations of human nature, completely forgetful of the dualism of which man is composed, thoroughly out of touch with the stern realities of life, Brand is determined to add to his failure by compelling the people to accept his pietistic views. They shall follow him to a higher church than one of brick and stone. They shall worship with him in the mountains where the physical limitations of a church do not exist. He closes the church-door, locks it, draws the key and throws it into the river. The people regarding him as a miracle-working saint follow him, believing that he can provide for their needs; but when he offers them doctrine for food and his ideal of self-crucifixion for their daily bread, they stone him and desert him.

Death.

Alone, he sees as in a vision all he has sacrificed for his impossible ideal of self-realization by complete self-renunciation. He has lost all, and found nothing. Wife, child, people, church, all are gone; yet he remains firm. Better for him, he feels, to climb higher and alone than return to his church and people. But his pitiless and unfeeling creed are not the true interpretation of God's ways toward weak and erring men, and though he strive alone to tread what he holds is the higher way, he must learn that he is no less in error than were his congregation. Bleeding and fainting he pushes on, until Gerd, the girl whom so many considered mad, yet who, in her madness, has nobler vision than Brand and his people, fires

the shot which looses the avalanche which pityingly stills his agonized heart. As the shadow of death is upon him Brand questions whether his conception of God and the universe is valid. Above the crashing thunder of the avalanche comes the reply, "He is the God of Love."

No Solution Offered.

Ibsen is criticized for failing to show the way out of the problem; but in justice to the dramatist it must be conceded that he did not undertake to do more than lay his finger on the disease which was destroying the moral sense of the nation satisfied with formal officialism, and the church contented with pietism and ritualism. He offers no solution. He hoped, perhaps, to stir a lethargic people by a denunciation of their sins. To chide, to criticize, to censure, was his mission as he saw it. To deprecate, to diagnoze, to disturb, was his aim. He would have failed in his particular mission, had he sought to accomplish more. He felt that iconoclasm must precede reconstruction, and he was content to fulfil his self-appointed task.

The Contrast.

If in "Brand" we have the type of the puritanical pietist who would make all men conform to his loveless, pitiless, merciless faith, who would find self-realization through self-crucifixion, we find the contrast drawn by Ibsen in his drama "Peer Gynt," which appeared two years later. If in "Brand" we find the hero completely consecrated to his decision and above all compromise, in

"Peer Gynt" we find the contrast, a person unwilling to come to any fixed decision. If in "Brand" we have a delineation of self-will completely sacrificed to its conception of the divine will, in "Peer Gynt" we have a description of the human will which finds its ultimate in following its own bent without regard to God or man. In both cases the dramatist portrays his native land: in the first case set and resolved in its decision to pursue its standards of formal piety; in the second case, unwilling to commit itself to any fixed course.

Peer Gynt's Character.

Peer Gynt is the son of a widowed mother, a member of a once well-to-do Norwegian family. His chief characteristic is a brilliant but lying imagination. He inscribes his ideal over the door of his mountain-hut; he will be "Emperor of Himself." Less harmful than Brand he will not invite others to share his ideal. He will realize himself for his own sake only. To him the finest type of man is the masterful hunter, the doer of brave deeds, the irresistible lover, the hero of a thousand fights. But while he indulges his dreams of greatness, for he conceives of himself though dirty and bepatched as the embodiment of all the heroic virtues, the property of his mother Aase, which he should have conserved, falls into ruin. The neighbors despise and snub him because of his habits; but he rarely resents their attitude, for he can always lie on his back, gaze upon the clouds and in fancy follow their course over land and sea,—a symbol of his own future adventures. He is strong in self-delusion and in self-indulgence only.

Despised of All but One.

For six weeks he has absented himself from his home and he returns to learn that Ingrid, the daughter of a rich villager, who his mother hopes may be his wife, is to wed Mads Moen on the morrow. At the wedding the maidens refuse to dance with him, but among the young women is one Solveig, a comparative stranger in the village, "to gaze on whom makes it Sunday," as Peer says, accepts his offer, but turns from him when she learns his name. And yet one look upon him has sealed Solveig's fate. She sees in Peer the man "God meant him to be," rather than the adventurous braggart he really is.

Deserted of all, no one will speak to him except the bridegroom who implores Peer's help to rescue the bride from the storehouse in which she has locked herself to avoid her "poor, craven husband." Peer rescues the bride, but carries her away for himself into the forest, where later on he leaves her, lured by the pure image of the beautiful Solveig. Contemptuously he cries,

> "Devil take all recollections!
> Devil take the tribe of women,—
> All but one!"

Peer is departing just as his mother Aase, with Solveig and her parents reach him, bent on securing the bride for her groom. His renunciation of Ingrid has left in his soul no desire for improvement, not a single regret. On the contrary; he sinks lower and lower in

coarse and sensual pleasures in the saeter mountains. Yet he dreams of grandeur even while his soul grovels in grossness. "Thou art come of great things," he tells himself, "and great things shall come of thee." But the great things never come.

Among the Trolds.

Peer is now in the Trold-King's domain, and we read with a sense of sickening disgust of the manner in which he submits to his own self-delusion and self-abasement. In the world of sin every so-called pleasure assumes delightful shape and is delicious in its awful attractiveness; but only because we are self-deluded like Peer. The Trold-King's daughter is foul and deformed, but the self-sufficient youth deludes himself into seeing in her a princess, and in the pig on which she rides a fiery charger,—so exquisite can sin make vice appear. He decides to live among the Trolds, but inconstant and weak of purpose he cannot abide his decision for long. To be wholly a Trold he must consent to have his eyes slit like theirs so that he may see things as they do; but he cannot follow any plan to its logical conclusion. He refuses to submit to the operation; he prefers to remain self-deceived, to go whither folly calls though his eyes be wide open.

Loses His Better Self.

Peer escapes from the Trolds, but he cannot any more escape the consequences of having been among them than can any of us escape the results which must neces-

sarily ensue from our deeds. That visit makes it clear to him that he cannot live with Solveig, the symbol of his better self, even when he has made preparations to receive her. Uplift of soul, sorrow for misdeed, he knows none. One appeal of conscience touches him, but he refuses to heed it. He rejects the appeal of his better self and thus sells himself to the power of evil.

His Mother Dies.

In his straits he returns to his mother, but on reaching her bedside he finds her dying. Breath enough remains in her to chide him for the loss of all her property which has been seized in payment of the fine imposed for his escapade with Ingrid, and to upbraid him with a reference to Solveig. Nothing changes him; he persists in his self-delusion. Even before he closes his mother's eyes in death, he pretends to drive her, in his effort to console her, to the very gates of heaven, using the bedpost as a horse to the chariot in which he proceeds to carry heaven by his will. Then when she dies he goes forth, but not until he has reverently closed her eyes and gratefully said,

> "For all thy days I thank thee,
> For all the beatings and lullabys!"

Peer a Man of Wealth.

Three decades now pass and next we find Peer a man of great wealth, but he is still the self-deluded, self-willed, self-indulgent, Peer. Ibsen's satire of his countrymen, of their politics and their religion, is here very

keen. For he represents Peer Gynt as being devoted to religion, yet making his money by selling idols and slaves, and also, as a compensation, Bibles and missionary supplies.

As man of affairs and wealth he takes some friends on a journey in his yacht. They desert him and leave him in a wilderness in Africa. At first he blasphemes the God who, he says, has him in His special charge; but when an explosion wrecks the yacht and all aboard are drowned, he comforts himself with the assurance that he is the object of a special providence. "Ah, God is a Father to me after all," he exclaims, "but economical He surely is not."

Experiences with Anitra.

A series of disconnected adventures follows, indicative of the great things he dreamed he might do, but never did. One day he finds a white horse in the desert. He steals it and, riding a distance, he reaches an Arab community which hails him as prophet. He is worshipped for himself instead of being desired, as he had been in his days of wealth, for his money. Among these Arabs his soul descends to the lowest depths of degradation, and Anitra, the dancing-maid, daughter of the chieftain, to whom he gives himself up with the utmost abandon, plucks him who would have fooled her.

Emperor of Himself.

Once more alone and deserted he wanders until he reaches Cairo where, at the Sphinx, he meets a German

who seeks to know the significance of the uncanny figure. Peer solves the difficulty by assuring him that "the Sphinx is itself." The German is much delighted with this answer, and the two discuss philosophy, until Peer receives from his companion an invitation to visit a club in Cairo whose members are anxious to receive such enlightenment as he can give. The club turns out to be a lunatic asylum whose inmates have imprisoned their keepers. Here the madmen crown Peer as Emperor of Himself. Such is the fate of him who seeks to realize his Self by the methods selected by Peer. He had indeed chosen his life; but to what had his choice now led?

In the midst of all this sordidness and selfishness we are carried back to Norway where we hear Solveig singing her inimitable song. Thither Peer, now an old man, returns like another Rip Van Winkle. His life has left its sad impress on body and soul, but he fails to see through all its unloveliness; self-deluded to the last he does not recognize himself as he really is. On his way home he is shipwrecked, but he is unwilling to die. He sees the Button-moulder, Death, and he seeks to avoid him as long as he can. He even forces from the spar, to which he is clinging, another shipwrecked man, lest the grain of wood be not large enough to float both of them.

Returns to Norway.

At last he reaches his home in which the faithful Solveig has loyally and longingly awaited his coming. She shows him by her love what the true Peer Gynt

might have been, and at last he sees what he has been and now is. But it is now too late. Thoughts, watchwords, songs, which might have been, taunt him, and the "tears which were never shed," and the "deeds which were never done," testify against him. Fool that he has been, all along he thought he had been himself, and now he sees that he has been no one. He cannot comfort himself that he has been a son of the Deity; nor can he find consolation in the thought that he has been a child of the devil; for, as Ibsen puts it, "it needs both force and earnestness to sin," and Peer has lacked both in his drifting along the road of animal self-indulgence.

The End.

Peer awakens to the realization that he is no one. At this moment of his self-awakenment he reaches Solveig's hut, where he expects to find "the list of his sins." But blind, old, loving Solveig knows nothing of them. She hears his footsteps and cries out, "It is he! It is he! Now Heaven be blessed!" She understands nothing of his self-reproach. All she can say to him is, "Thou hast made all my life as a beautiful song." Peer fails to understand. He asks her to tell him then where the real Peer Gynt has been all these years, and she answers, "In my faith, in my hope, in my love." There he dies, with his face buried in her lap; and there he learns that the empire of which he would have been the overlord was not far removed from the love which she might have inspired in him.

Our Mode of Appreciation.

It is unnecessary to attempt to interpret what seems to us the beautiful symbolism of this poem, or to indicate the pertinence of its lines to the conditions which prevailed in Ibsen's land in his day. The ultimate lesson is clear. Self-realization through selfish indulgence leads to death just as does self-realization through self-crucifixion. In many places the author dipped his pen in gall as he wrote, hoping to stir his countrymen from their lethargy, their self-righteousness and their self-sufficiency. In his own day Ibsen received the high recognition to which his genius entitled him for writing these dramatic poems. In our day we can best show our appreciation by endeavoring to catch his deepest suggestions and by applying them to the needs of our own lives.

Ibsen's Purpose.

In his plays "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" the gifted author has endeavored to disclose for our consideration those opposing types of character with which we have been made familiar since the earliest times and of those types of religion and politics which have resulted therefrom. In "Brand" we have restraint and repression carried to their ultimate consequences. In "Peer Gynt" we have the consequences of self-indulgence and the self-delusion which it promotes. Let us consider two other illustrations of these conceptions which may help us to see how they embody the ultimates of these two views of life.

Self-Crucifixion.

The Church of the Capucines, the Santa Maria della Concezione, in Rome, stands as an embodiment of the ideal of self-crucifixion. Once I visited it and saw the cemetery beneath the church in which are collected the bones of the many priests who have died in self-denying service of their master. The walls are covered with skulls and bones. The chandeliers are made of the skulls of former priests, and in that chamber of death I saw holy men raking the soil in which they were finally to be buried. It is as though a voice spoke through these monks and relics saying, "Man, what is life? Prepare thy grave! This world is a fleeting show; the grave is the one place fit to be heeded and tended!"

Self-Indulgence.

Yonder in the far-off Vale of Daphne the ancients indulged in the worship of the heathen deity. The beautiful grounds about the shrine were exquisite in their glorious cultivation. But therein was a rottenness of soul displayed which, to this day, shocks the sensibilities of those who read of it. The god was worshipped; but how? By the beauty of holiness? Alas, no! but by those indulgences which spelled the desecration of all that we hold most sacred on this side of heaven. It meant the ruin of woman's virtues. It meant the subjection of the soul to the sins of the body. Yet it was said in those far-off days that "those who knew not the joys of the Vale of Daphne never knew pleasure."

In our own day we see the efforts made by those who would seek to choose life. They are not unlike the types portrayed by these illustrations. We have the self-denying who seek by self-restraint to find blessing. We find the boulevardiers,—not only the Parisian but those nearer home,—who indulge the vices condemned by the progressing ideals of a progressive age. Each of us must choose for himself the way he would go,—the way of culture or the way of restraint, the way of self-indulgence or the way of self-denial, the way of blessing or the way of curse.

We Must Choose.

Shall we, Brand-like, insist on conformity to our idea, or shall we permit liberty of thought and action? Shall we, Peer Gynt-like, indulge ourselves to the full, seeking our own pleasures yet breaking hearts and divine precepts? Which way shall we go? Shall we make of religion that to which Calvinism would reduce the world? Shall we believe that the world is under a curse, and make life consonant with such a view, robbing it of all joy in the effort to gain the good-will of an offended God? Shall we make of religion that to which monasticism would reduce it? Ibsen does not answer such questions. He did not write with the view of so doing. He sets before us the ultimates. We must choose. Each of us must select his own course with the knowledge that each of us must bear the consequences of his own acts.

We must not deduce general principles from isolated cases, but if we seek guidance we shall find that the prophets and teachers of men have not, without good rea-

son, gained their ascendancy as guides and counsellors. Out of the mouth of wisdom came, then, the conception of the Jewish masters that "the way of life is, on the one hand, a flaming fire and, on the other, a mountain of ice. Avoid the fire and avoid the ice," said the Rabbis, "and walk between." The way of life is that which will bring man blessing and not curse, and that way will ever be found by the man who lives in reverence for God and who strives to keep His commands.

The Middle Path.

Some attach themselves to altruism; some find individualism the noblest solution to life. For the average man the path between will be found safest and best. That is the road which will most surely lead to that condition in which every man may sit under his own vine and his own fig-tree, where none shall make him afraid. Religion is no sour, miserable, wet-blanket experience. Its aim is to bring life and blessing, not death and curse. It is to be the life under the highest law, wherein law is deepened and spiritualized by the power of love. Wiser than men of the type of Brand, more glorious far than the Peer Gynts, are the teachers who have echoed the words of Scripture, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life." No man can live another's life, nor die another's death. Each must live and die for himself; but thrice blessed is he who, while living for himself, so lives that others are blessed by his influence and example; who so lives that, after his death, his good deeds continue to live.

HENRIK IBSEN

III. The Pillars of Society.*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah v.

I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. (Jeremiah i., 9).

In every age God has sent into this world a few persons whose function it has been to play the role of the reformer. In every land and age the reformer of the type of the prophet, whose undying messages we have just heard from sacred Scripture, has been hated and feared. In every period of the world's history the prophet whose words promote the highest good of all has been without honor in his own land and day. The task of the reformer is that of the fearless and candid critic; and human nature hates those who criticize us and tell us the truth.

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

Some Weaknesses of Human Nature.

Most of us love to be flattered. Most of us are as anxious to be complimented as a child is to receive sweets. Most girls desire to be told that Hebe and Juno and Venus were homely when compared with them. Most youths love to hear that they are fit to be models for the sculptor who is designing an Apollo or a Hercules. Every man and woman, and I hasten to exclude the rare exceptions, wishes to hear that the ugly ducklings at home are swans of whitest hue and softest down, while every individual whose voice is raucous as a crow's wishes to be told that the nightingale's notes are poor music compared to theirs. We do so love to be flattered. We do so revel in those empty compliments which are really naught but an insult to human intelligence.

The Manner of the Reformer.

The prophet cannot descend to such abominable tricks. He has none of the ways of the suave and smooth pillars of society. His hair is unkempt; his beard is undressed. He does not procure his garments at the fashionable tailor's establishment. He loses himself in his message, at the side of which nothing is important. He cares nothing for the fads and foibles of frivolous fraternities. He despises most of the things which others love. Therefore is he regarded with a certain degree of dislike and distrust wherever he goes. People look upon him with eyes of disdain and expressions of contempt. They pretend to believe him mad, though he is really the wisest man of his day.

The Prophet's Function.

The prophet's mission is to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, as well as to build and to plant. Before we can erect a new house on the site of the old it is necessary to demolish the old. It is possible, of course, to erect the new while the old still stands; and if one is indifferent to expense this system of erection may be resorted to; but speaking generally we must break down before we can build up, we must overthrow before we can plant. There are those who are known as prophets whose greatest service to humanity has consisted in their ability to indicate the obstacles to be removed, even though they have devoted no time to the consideration of the methods to be adopted for the removal of these obstacles. The message of rebuke is not without its invaluable help.

If, for instance, you were about to leave a certain place for your homes, and one were to tell you that the road over which you expected to travel were impassable, he would have rendered you a great service. He might not have done as much for you as he who would remove the difficulty from your path; but since he would save you the trouble of going a certain distance on a road over which you would be compelled to return, he would, to that extent, have proven of help to you.

He Who Indicates Obstacles Is Our Friend.

There were men in Israel as wonderfully great as Jeremiah who felt that they had fulfilled their function

by indicating to the people of Israel the sins of society, the evils which afflicted priest and people, the wrongs which were flagrantly committed on the highway, the wickedness which festered in the hearts of men, the passions which devitalize human nature, the crimes which imperil the state. It is true that Jeremiah also indicated that the law of God operates without fear or favor and that nothing can thwart its operation; but Jeremiah only incidentally enters upon a full explanation of the manner and method of solving these difficulties by suggesting and urging and warning and counseling the repentance that was necessary. My thought is that he who shows us the evil of our doings is also the friend of humanity; and though he may not clearly outline the way out, he has, nevertheless, proven himself our friend.

The Role of the Prophet.

The prophet appears in many guises; he assumes manner forms. Sometimes he is a preacher. Sometimes he is a statesman. Sometimes he is a historian. Sometimes he is an economist. Sometimes he is a poet. Sometimes he is a lawyer. Sometimes he is a dramatist. A man always of "clean hands and a pure heart," the prophet is one who speaks in the name of God, his aim being "to show unto the people their sins and unto the sons of men their transgressions." In this respect Ibsen plays the role of the prophet when he turns from dealing with romance and history, takes up the discussion of social problems, and becomes a teacher in the school of life.

The Influences That Changed Ibsen's Course.

When our author made this decision he was fast approaching his fiftieth year. He had seen two of the gravest crises pass over Europe. A vast military power bent upon developing a united country had crushed small and weak nations, and he regretfully wrote,

> "With forgotten vows, with deceitful words,
> With treaties torn and repealed,
> With oaths of yesterday broken today,
> You have fertilized history's field."

This may be taken to represent his comment on the Schleswig-Holstein war and the Austro-German conflict. Then, too, he had seen the utter failure of the Commune of Paris, which, in his eyes, ought to have succeeded, for it spelt the overthrow of that form of state to which he was opposed. His idea of the "Third Empire," to which he had given expression in his "Emperor and Galilean," seemed to him to be about to be fulfilled; when, to his horror, he saw the terrible struggle in Paris, in 1871, spell failure to the high hope that the people might gain greater freedom through communes than through a strong centralized government.

Ibsen and the State.

At this time, when the political map of Europe had been changed, the popular demand for the socialized state began to find stronger advocates than ever before. Ibsen, in common with men like Herbert Spencer and Prince Kropotkin, felt that nothing really mattered in

the state except the development of the individual. To him individuality, personality, was everything, and at the side of it everything else was as nothing. Thus he felt himself called to the task of teaching the need of individuality. He became the social physician endowed with wonderful diagnostic ability. Though he might not be able to suggest remedies and cures, he could at least indicate the causes of the social diseases and plead for their cure. The state, he well knew, cannot be stronger than the individuals forming the state. For the state is an aggregation of individuals, and in the strength and courage and independence of its men and in the virtues and chastity and fearlessness of its women must ever lie the true dignity of the state. He, therefore, essayed the prophetic function and began to "pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow," those elements which impeded the fulfilment of his ideal of individuality.

The People Do Not Heed.

Just as Jeremiah found the people "refuse to receive correction and make their faces harder than a rock," just as the great prophet realized that the people were bent on following their own inclinations despite any warning or counsel he might offer, so the people were disinclined to listen to this individualist. They attached importance to some trifling statement, or criticized some minor character, or disliked or liked some well-turned phrase or dramatic situation. But his message remained unheeded in most cases. Neither his

cynicism, nor his satire, nor his invective, nor his gentle suggestions, were really understood or taken to heart.

Ibsen found himself in the same position as confronts many a consecrated clergyman in our day who knows that the congregation has a habit of overlooking the import of the pulpit message, of missing the lesson he seeks to convey, and of bitterly arraigning him for some slip of the tongue, or for some ungrammatical construction, or for some detail which is of no importance as far as the truth of his theme is concerned. It is the despair of preachers of long experience in the pulpit that the congregants do not seem to realize that his words may be sources of life and death to many who are likely to come under the influence of his utterances.

The Evil of This Disregard.

Personally I believe that many a young man and woman have become scoffers at things most sacred, have been converted into haters of religion and of the spiritual life, because some unthinking persons, sometimes mothers and fathers, have been foolish enough to criticize, in the hearing of some impressionable young people, some unimportant utterance of the man whose duty it is to direct their children along the road to the life religious. For they pick and quarrel over the unessential and unimportant word and magnify it out of all proportion. This failing is apt to be most disastrous in its effect on children. Criticize and discuss by all means, let me say in passing, but it should be the aim of parents to en-

deavor to catch the spirit of the message and respectfully discuss it with the young. If adverse criticism there must be of the teacher, unless his doctrine is subversive of good morals, (and in that case parents should not put their children under his guidance, but should choose another teacher), it should never be indulged in in the presence of the young.

Hating to Hear the Truth.

Ibsen found what so many honest leaders of men have discovered that, before genuine improvement can be hoped for, men and women must overcome at least two human weaknesses. In the first place, as I have already indicated, we love to be flattered, and out of this failing comes the hatred of the truth. Let a Rabbi, for instance, address his congregation about the wonderful story of Israel's martyrdom, and it is indeed a most wonderful story, or let him tell his people that they are "the chosen of the Lord!" Let him descant upon the wonderful services of Moses and the Prophets, of the resolute resistance of Israel to all the blandishments of the world! Let him show how, in spite of "hatred, scoffing, and abuse," the people of Israel have remained faithful to a high ideal of human service! Let him dilate on the virtues of this people in those ages when virtue was at a premium, and of the fidelity of the Jewess when morality outside of Israel was at a low ebb! Ah, then the congregation will go home satisfied, and on all sides you will hear, "Now that was a wonderful sermon, a really beautiful lecture!"

Excuse the purely personal turn this address has here taken, but I desire to assure you that when I have been told after I have delivered "a nice sermon," or "a beautiful lecture," I have felt myself insulted, because I do not come here on Sabbath and Sunday to deliver nice sermons or lectures. You have placed me here to interpret the truth to you, and before God I say it this has been my sole purpose in endeavoring to teach in this pulpit. I believe that many of the men and women who are not here week after week have learned this fact, and I interpret their absence not to mean that I cannot entertain, or instruct, or edify, but that they cannot bear to listen to the truth. Absence from the Jewish house of worship, in all too many cases, may be traced to the fact that so many members of modern congregations hear, on the occasions of their few visits, what they do not wish to hear. They no more desire to hear a Rabbi preach than they go to see Ibsen's plays, and for the same reason,—they cannot stand the naked truth; they desire to be flattered, not taught.

Ibsen Writes About Life.

Ibsen undertook to use the stage as a pulpit, once he turned from history and romance to the affairs of daily life. He knew that the stage may become the means of edification, of instruction and of inspiration. He determined to hold the mirror up to nature. He became a social physician. He laid bare the symptoms of the diseases afflicting society. He knew that no patient can hope to become cured unless the diagnosis of his dis-

ease has been carefully and correctly made. The task of enlightening the sick as to the nature of their ailments is not pleasant, but he did not flinch. He could not stir men from their follies and faults by holding dainty perfume bottles to their nostrils. More heroic measures were necessary, and he found himself called to those duties of the prophet, "to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow."

The Line of Least Resistance.

The other reprehensible weakness with which he had to deal was the same difficulty with which Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah, and all the noble company of prophets throughout the world's history, have been confronted. Men, like the blind and inanimate things of nature, are afflicted with a desire to take the path of least resistance. We suffer from a disease called lethargy. We do not wish to be disturbed. We are comfortable and contented and we resent the intrusion upon our mental vision of sights which unsettle us. We are quite happy in our ignorance and we hate the man who will not "let well alone."

When the Hebrews left Egypt and saw the Egyptians pursuing them, the slaves of a few days ago turned in anger on Moses their emancipator and menacingly cried, "Is not this the word we said unto thee in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone?' " And is not this the word which is still said by the people to him who desires to lead them toward the Land of Promise, to the mountain whence they may obtain a glimpse of the better things

of life? Do not the people speak thus to the prophet who would lead them onward? Do they not thus assail the leader who would indicate to them the path they ought to pursue? Do they not hate the man who would arrest their footsteps which are bent toward the road which leads to the devil of destruction and the hell of remorse, if I may use the terminology of the old-time theology?

The Social Dramas.

Ibsen set himself the task of dealing with these two characteristics so destructive to human progress. He undertook not to flatter but to tell the truth; he promised himself not to grow faint or weary in his effort but to endure to the end, despite the desire of the many to be let alone. Life as it is became the subject of his writings, and one after the other his so-called "Social Dramas" began to appear. His ripe experience had taught him much, and what he had learned he was anxious to share with others. He had come to the conclusion that certain essential truths must be learned by society, and his "Plays of Social Life" were his medium of expressing them.

No thoughtful person can read these plays and not be conscious of Ibsen's desire to teach, if only by indirection, that he understood the prophet's duty of "building and planting." For he pleads most emphatically for truthfulness in all human relations; for care and wisdom in entering into contracts the letter and spirit of which must be scrupulously kept; for the right of

equal freedom as enunciated by Herbert Spencer; for recognition of the evil of power sought for the selfish end of satisfying one's egotism; for respect for the doctrine of individual and social responsibility. This was his constructive programme, and we shall see how he began if we devote a short time to a brief consideration of the first of these social dramas which appeared in 1877 under the name of "The Pillars of Society."

The Chief Character in the Play.

The title of the play is well chosen, for it deals with those who, in their little community, occupy positions of importance and are men and women of light and leading. Nearly all of them have a past in which the characteristics to be denounced in the play have had time to mature. The chief offender against the eternal verities is Consul Bernick, a man who has made a huge success financially, but who has failed miserably in the most important matter of making a life. He is the most important man in the community. He is, as was just said, very rich and influential, but both his wealth and influence have been gained in very questionable ways.

He has jilted the woman of his choice for her step-sister, because the mother of his wife, at her death, left no money to her step-daughter. He has been guilty of a shameful escapade with a married actress, which resulted in bringing more or less disgrace upon the daughter of this actress, Dina Dorf. Moreover, he has succeeded in inducing his wife's brother, Johan Tonne-

sen, to assume the responsibility for this misconduct, especially as Johan saw that, by so doing, he would have an excuse for departing from the narrow and provincial atmosphere of the hated town, and that, furthermore, he might be able to spare his sister, Mrs. Bernick, the shame and disgrace which would result from an exposure of the Consul's immorality. Johan flees to America and Lona Hessel, the jilted step-sister of Mrs. Bernick, a little later, also takes the opportunity of paying a visit to the land of the free, thus emancipating herself from the narrowing influences of the petty place and offering Bernick the opportunity of redeeming the past by a change of heart and life.

The Pillar of Society.

In the sight of those who do not know the inner life of the Consul, there appears to be no reason why he should, in any way, change the course of his life. To the townsfolk he is a pillar of society. He is regarded as the most public-spirited member of the town in which there exist many evidences of his generosity and bounty. In charity and in church life he is to the front. The people believe him to be entirely unselfish and disinterested, endowed with all the graces of commercial integrity and enterprise, and wholly upright and dependable. The truth is that this pillar of society is a hollow sham, and Ibsen intends to tear away the mask and display him in true proportions.

For Bernick's controlling passion is a contemptible

self-interest indulged at the expense of every honorable sentiment and of the fundamental principles of common morality. He is dominated by greed, cowardice and dishonor. He may be believed to have deprived his sister of her share of her inheritance and of having robbed his own mother. His private affairs are in an unsafe financial state, and he deftly discredits Johan Tonnesen the more by permitting it be believed that he has taken the Consul's cash box with him when he fled to America. For financial advantage he has, thus, inflicted irreparable injury on an innocent man, who has willingly borne the burden of guilt of which he is innocent, while it is solely for the sake of gaining power and place that he has made the gifts and benefactions to the city. Even his pose as supporter of public enterprises has only been assumed for the purpose of increasing his own advantages. Externally Consul Bernick and his likes may be respectable; in their souls they are nothing but hypocrites and tottering pillars of the society they curse by their presence.

Others Harmed by the Consul.

The arrant insincerity of the man spreads everywhere, and fouls everything it touches. Martha, his sister, is sacrificed to his covetous selfishness. Her lover, Johan, is forced from her side, and this lonely woman, one of Ibsen's many lovely female characters, is left to a life of repining, amid the splendid misery of her brother's home, singing in her soul the woman's saga, "To love, to sacrifice all, to be forgotten." The Consul's

wife has lost all individuality, utterly overcome by the force of her husband's imperious will. Dina Dorf, her actress mother dead, has been adopted into the house of the Consul, while all the little world of the gossiping town is lost in admiration of Bernick's supposed generosity. Doctor Rorlund, the schoolmaster, is enamored of Dina, but dare not marry her because of the scandal connected with her birth, and he is fearful lest the criticism which would greet the knowledge of his affection would make the pillars of society totter.

The Play Opens.

The play opens with some very respectable persons discussing the necessity of bearing aloft "the banner of the ideal" in the presence of Dina, who is now an attractive young woman. Ibsen undertakes to flay the artificialty and apparent insincerity of society in large and small communities, and he uses as his means of attack the high-flown language of those Pharisees who are always thanking God that they are not as other men. He has learned something of the economic life of nations, and he also takes the opportunity of showing that, in the smaller communities, there may be found degrees of rottenness which larger communities would never tolerate. He also deals with the relation of capital and labor and in the person of Aune, the master workman in Consul Bernick's shipyard, he touches upon the slavery to conditions inherent in the life of labor so long as the employer can, by means foul or fair, reduce the workingmen to the necessity of choosing between starvation

and loss of individuality. All in all the first act of the play shows the seeds well planted; in the subsequent acts we are to see the mature growth of the planting.

The Sins to Be Hidden.

At all odds the spurious respectability of the Consul must be maintained. Dina, who yearns to leave the narrow limitations of the goose-pond of gossip, must remain where she is. The Consul's choice of his wife for financial reasons must never be known. He has cheated his conscience by making himself believe that money covers all sins. To the pillars of society the prudent thing is always the wisest and best thing. For to such morality means policy, not principle. It is even deemed wise for these pillars to send missionaries to other lands; for such an act looks like disinterestedness and generosity; but, in reality, they who send the missionaries to the "lapsed and lost" stand in greater need of spiritual help than those they offensively undertake to help,—almost always, be it known, for the advantage of the promoters of the missions.

The Maturing Scheme.

At this period of his life Bernick is engaged in the endeavor to gain the right of way for a railroad which will, in some way, tap the resources of the town. Once before he had fought the building of a coast line in, what he had represented to be, the interests of his town, but what was really his own interest. Now he is about

to succeed in having a branch line reach the town. He makes the people believe that he is animated only by public spirit; but the truth of the matter is that he has already optioned vast tracts of land through which the railroad will pass, and he and his accomplices, who are to be rewarded with a small number of shares in each case, are easily able to deceive the people into believing in Bernick's fine public spirit and continued unselfishness. How like a fawning hypocrite he stands before us! No ancient Pharisee ever played the game of duplicity with greater skill. No publican or sinner ever exceeded in rascality this pillar of society, who is the prototype of numerous cases, in every city, of men who seek their own gain by denouncing honest men and by hiding themselves behind the breastworks of church and charity.

The Gathering of the Thunderbolt.

His respectable position apparently secure, Bernick can permit nothing to occur which may dull the brightness of his social position. But, poor fool at the very time when his schemes were fast maturing, at the very hour when he was indulging the brightest dreams of a happy future for himself and wife and Olaf, their child, the lightning flashes through a blue sky. Johan and Lona return from America. The former has stood disgraced because of his supposed indiscretions and dishonesty; the latter we have gathered from the conversation of the women at the beginning of the play is "a new woman." She has sung in public for pay, has actually delivered public addresses and written a book.

The Beginnings of the Scandal.

The return of these miscreants is a public scandal, which becomes the "talk of the town" when members of the Consul's family are seen speaking to them. But Bernick soothes his conscience by the reflection that they will not remain in the town for any length of time. How greatly he is to be disappointed remains to be seen! For Johan has come home to stay, and Lona Hessel is to be a conscience incarnate for the sinning Consul. Lona has already been able to see beneath the thin veneer of his public benefactions. His good deeds may blind everybody else; her they cannot deceive. It is interesting to note how, on the other hand, Dina Dorf is attracted to Johan, who has filled her with a desire to go to America, the larger community where the paltriness and pettiness of the little town are unknown. Seeing that the town believes Dina to be Johan's child, the people stand aghast at his moral turpitude. The walls are shaking; the pillars seem about to fall.

The Conscience Incarnate.

But the Consul discovers that Johan has no evil intentions toward him. The supposed scapegrace is willing to return to America if Dina will accompany him; Lona, however, will remain, and Bernick sees, since Johan has told him that Lona knows all the details, that the person to be feared is this woman he has wronged in discarding her for her rich step-sister. Lona is to be his Nemesis. Her quiet discussion with the Consul proves

her to be a woman of fine insight and deep feeling. She is dissatisfied with the lies on which the life of the community has been built. The pillars of society, she sees, are warped and insecure. She resolves to help Bernick to improve their condition, but he is in no way anxious for the improvement. Since everybody believes the glittering metal to be gold, why undeceive them? Yes, why? But Ibsen views of life are not cowardly. No one can be the pillar if the wood is rotten or the stone full of flaws. The lie must be atoned for; the cursed spot must be worked out.

The Consul Unrepentant.

The author now draws all the threads of the story into a skein and hurries to the end. Johan decides to go to America to return home again in a couple of months when he is to be cleared of all accusations by the Consul whose letters he has, and in which he has confessed his former wrongdoing. Dina Dorf is willing to accompany him and marry him, since she has already learned the truth, and is now unwilling to marry the "respectable" Doctor Rorlund, who is willing to "help her to rise." The Consul remains obdurate. His sins have not yet been seen by him in all their enormity. He is determined to fight for his life. Never in all his career did he need to be regarded with greater esteem by his accomplices and the townfolk than just now when his railroad scheme is fast maturing and bids fair to succeed.

Complications.

When Johan informs him that he is about to leave for America on the American ship, the "Indian Girl," which is being repaired in the Consul's shipyard, Bernick for the moment breathes freely, villain that he is. For this is the ship which is unseaworthy and which he has commanded Aune to get ready for sea at short notice or lose his position. At the side of it in the dockyard lies the Norwegian ship the "Palm Tree," also prepared to sail for America. In the belief that Johan is to travel on the doomed ship the Consul sees relief from his anxiety, for he knows that Johan can never reach shore alive. The hour of departure is at hand. A terrific storm is raging, but Johan leaves to sail on the "Indian Girl" and is followed by Olaf, the Consul's son, who hides himself as a stowaway on the doomed vessel.

The end is fast approaching. Lona has fairly influenced the Consul to cast away the worse half of his heart and live a truer and better life with the other. A torchlight procession is coming to Bernick's house as a testimonial of the public's approval of his life and service to the town. Speeches are to be made and the Consul, though by no means in a frame of mind to do so, will be compelled to respond.

More Complications.

At this moment Johan returns to give Lona Hessel the incriminating letters to use if necessity arises. He has been aided in the plan to take Dina with him by

Martha, the woman who loves him, and who is prepared for every sacrifice in the name of love. Lona is a gad-fly to the Consul. She stings him into action. She has brought him almost to the point of renouncing his evil ways and evil gains. But the ruling passion is still strong. Why, after all, sacrifice himself? Will not his ill-gotten fortune be a boon to Olaf his son? As a proof of her moral ideal Lona tears to tatters the letters Johan had given her. His accusers are gone, and the incriminating letters are destroyed. If he wishes he may renounce; if he wishes he "may remain standing on the lie."

Confession.

News is now brought of Olaf's departure on the "Indian Girl." In a moment of horror Bernick sees that he has proposed and God has disposed. Everything has been in vain. The brilliance of his home is but "the light in a dead room." His boy must die at sea, nothing can save him. But when the mother returns with the child, and information shows that Johan has sailed on the "Palm Tree" and, furthermore, that the "Indian Girl" has not sailed, for Aune has defied his master's orders, a moral revulsion takes place. When Doctor Rorlund praises the Consul in the hearing of the people the latter does not reply with his set speech. On the contrary, he makes an open confession of all his faults and wrongdoing. The people slink away, but atonement is at hand.

The True Pillars Are Truth and Freedom.

Lona is triumphant. From the moment she learned of her former lover's sin she had set before herself the task of effecting his moral regeneration. The Consul asks for her forgiveness and she gives freely, for "at last he has found his true self." Baffled and ashamed, contrite and sorrowful, the repentant sinner now turns to the good women about him and assures them that he has learned much that day. He says, "It is you women who are the pillars of society." But Lona disagrees. She adds, as the curtain falls, "No, no; the spirits of Truth and Freedom,—these are the Pillars of Society."

Modern Slavery and Falsehood.

Indeed Ibsen is right. Truth and Freedom are the pillars of society; yet we hate to hear the truth and we rejoice in the fact that we are slaves. For in very numerous cases, all too many, we are slaves of fashion, slaves of society's usages in which we do not believe. We are slaves to custom and costume, to society's mandates and majorities. We are slaves to our neighbors' opinions, slaves to the dictates of a spurious respectability which crushes every speck of our individuality. We are slaves, ten thousand times slaves, wearing the liveries of lies and adorning ourselves in the habits of a silly set which become the manacles of a slave people.

Was Nordau altogether wrong when he said, "We lie in our parlors and on our walks abroad, as we lie in the church, at the polls, and in the marriage bureaus and

exchanges. * * * In the densest crowd those society people only see one single person,—their own; in the liveliest conversation while they appear to be listening to ten voices, following the trains of thought of ten others, forgetting their own selves and only living on the words of others, they are in reality only thinking of and hearing one thing,—their Ego. Thus egotism perverts even the harmless relations between men so that the forms of social intercourse, created by the instinct of fellowship between man and man, have become lies, because selfish, inconsiderate individualism is now their sole substance.''

The Manner of the Falsehood.

Some lie when they rise, some when they sleep, some in their business, some in their office. We lie on the streets and in our homes. The very breath in our mouths, all too often, is lies. We paint our faces and we lie. We dye our hair and we lie. We entertain people in our homes, we bow and scrape before them, and if they have enough money, we accept them; and we lie because we pretend to be flattered by their attentions when, in our heart of hearts, we despise them. Truth and freedom are the pillars of society; but we do not greatly desire such pillars. So many of us prefer lies, wish for falsities, are willing to accept artificiality and superficiality in place of genuineness and profundity.

The Resultant Slavery.

It results that, in an age and in a land wherein we ought to be free and own ourselves, we are still little

more than slaves. In an age and land in which God has been kinder to us than to any people in any period; in a country in which a nation has, in one century, reached an economic position which others have not obtained in a millennium; in a nation which enjoys the privilege of free education, which calls itself the founder of the world's greatest democracy; what do we find? What has society become, in all too many cases, but an erotic clique where, apparently, the grossest sensualism prevails? Our dear mothers had their society too, but, it seems to me, they managed to live with clean hands and pure hearts. But are modern mothers, in very numerous cases, satisfied with the homely virtues which graced the heads of our mothers? Upon the heads of the women who bore us we, gratefully, place the crown of respectful devotion. But look at society circles today and what do we often find? Mothers weaving crowns for their own heads in the form of halos made from the smoke which rises from their filthy cigarettes!

The Resultant Degradation.

Men and women, we who are of Israel are, generally speaking, opposed to prohibition. Most of us believe that prohibition will not prohibit, and that the agitation now rife in America is based on a false interpretation of human nature. But when I see women lower themselves, as I have seen with my own eyes; when I hear of married women sitting in public places on the laps of men who are not their husbands, caressing and kissing them, while the subtle spirit of wine is working their moral undoing;

and when I hear that, in some cases, Jewish women have been known to do this; when I hear how, under the influence of strong drink, those who are responsible to children for their example, not to speak of the question of self-respect, have been guilty in this regard; I am almost tempted, although I have no faith in the movement, to join the ranks of those who would remove strong drink from society, to the end that such disgraceful and disgusting orgies become impossible in public places, yea, and in private, too.

The Error of Our Ways.

We must rid ourselves of the false belief that the evils which are characteristic of the red-light districts can be removed to so-called respectable neighborhoods and be maintained by those who consider themselves the pillars of society. Those of us, who most desire public esteem, who are anxious to have the worthy among men and women call upon us, because of our position occupy places for which society holds us responsible. Because such have greater opportunity it must not be supposed that they may indulge in greater vices. As far as I am concerned I shall never permit my mouth to be closed so long as I am able to speak a word of condemnation of such orgies as I heard were indulged in this city, in hotels and on the streets, during the recent observance of New Year's, and of which, I am reliably informed, some Jews, though few in number, as well as some non-Jews were equally guilty.

The Sabbathless Spirit.

This leads me to remark that while I, your Rabbi, was engaged in the Falk Memorial Library last Christmas night teaching our Bible to a few faithful Jews, a large number of the men of my congregation were gathered at the Concordia Club enjoying a cabaret show. I have no objection to those who are interested in cabaret shows attending such a delightful (?) pastime if they so wish. It is all a matter of taste and as the old Roman said, De gustibus non est disputandum, "We must not dispute in the matter of taste" or, probably, in the lack of taste. But when, as an offset to a Bible Class, the members of a congregation are regaled with a danse de ventre; when, on the holy Sabbath eve, as was the case last Christmas, a Jewish Club offers that kind of an entertainment and the members of a Jewish congregation spend their Sabbath eve in that way; I cannot help feeling that those, who thus forget the spirit of the holy Sabbath eve, have done much to prove that they place themselves by such an act outside of the body of those who entertain the fine feeling which, at one time, animated the Jew with regard to the Sabbath eve. I doubt very much if fine Christians would attend a cabaret show on their Sabbath; and if you tell me that clubs frequented by Christians are, sometimes and in some places, the scenes of entertainment out of keeping with the spirit of their Sabbath, then I tell you that those Christians who so indulge themselves are not fine Christians.

Social Climbing.

Truth and Freedom are the pillars of society, but many a parent errs in the matter of freedom, especially with regard to the innocent child. When I see the "climbing" parents indulging in those extremes to which such foolish persons go in the endeavor to obtain the so-called "social advantages" for their children, my heart bleeds for the little ones. There was a time when boys and girls of fifteen and sixteen years did not belong to social sets and dancing circles as is now all too often the case. Is it possible, friends, that you do not know that, between the limits of fourteen and eighteen years of age, the strongest passions are awakened in the average girl and boy? and do you not know that, at that period, a mother must most carefully keep watch over her children lest, God forbid, the young grow up without moral restraint? Do you not realize that, at that time of life, in the early formative and impressionable years, a girl should be so guarded that passions be not unduly awakened? Do you not understand this, my friends, or do you not care whether your girls go to the hell of uncontrol or not?

Broken Columns.

We would be pillars of society; but we are only succeeding in making ourselves broken columns or warped pillars. Let us be honest! Those who are bent on getting most out of the world, without caring what good they put into it, are not those who are the most useful or

most valuable citizens. The pleasure seeker, the lotus-eater, the sybarite, never was, and never will be, the typically happy person. Tell me the names of those who throughout history's recorded pages have become to us shining illustrations of the art of living! Are they the pleasure seekers? Are they the lovers of "a good time?" We read of the Sapphos and Aspasias. We read of the gay harlots who engaged the attention of even learned men; but, after all, they were prostitutes. Do you know, after reading the recorded pages of Grecian, Roman, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian worthies, the names of those whose lives were devoted to pleasure seeking? The saddest story in all human experience is the unvarying confession of the pleasure-lover, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

Melancholy Reflections.

Suppose that a clergyman can say over the dead body of a congregant, "This man left as an inheritance for his son the fact that he was the best poker player in the town." What of it? Suppose a woman has left as the endowment of her daughter that she was the choicest dancer of the most intricate dances. What of it? What a tribute to pay to the memory of a father or mother, when we know most often, like father like son; like mother like daughter. Yes, let us be honest with one another. Let us be perfectly frank and open with one another! Do you really imagine that we who are parents; who have aspirations to be somebody and to do something worth while before we die; who wish to feel that,

before we are called to our last account, we have added something to the sum of human good; do you really believe that, out of the silly talk and vile joke, and out of the cigarette-smoking mother, and out of the card-playing set, and out of the ever-dancing crowd, and out of such as are interested in nothing higher than these, we are going to rear the resistant Jew with a world mission? Do you think that when I, your Rabbi, whom you have set over you to teach you, go around, as I often do, and find that, only in the rarest instance, do my people know anything about the Jewish question as it affects humanity, that the Jewish Scriptures are comparatively unknown, that the Jewish idealism is giving way before American commercialism, do you think that I can gain heart of hope from the pillars of society who know not what these mean?

Be Guided by Bernick's Failure.

Let us mend our ways betimes, you and I,—yea, all of us. Let us realize that truth and freedom are the pillars of society by means of which we may attain to that honesty of purpose which Ibsen rightly demanded as the foundation of all communal life. Let us cast to the ground those hypocrisies which made of Consul Bernick's life a sham and a delusion. Let us be done with those artificialities which made the home of Betty Bernick like unto a jewel in the snout of a hog. Let us be careful of the companions we choose. I know persons who, for years, have striven to enter social sets in which I, for one, would be ashamed to be found dead. I know

men and women who have strained every nerve to get themselves invited to homes to enter which I would not move a finger. I know men and women in whose company, though undesired by many of you, I love to pass my time. In every community there are those who are regarded as pillars of society, yet whose lives are as hollow as those whom Ibsen condemned in his play, and whose wealth has been obtained by means as reprehensible as that which his play disapproves. Read the play for yourselves. While much of it is not true of the exact conditions of our life, there is so much of it that, in some way or other, may apply to each of us that we shall all be the better for laying its lessons to heart.

Facts, Not Lies.

Many of us, who are still young enough to mend our ways, who are honest enough to see ourselves portrayed in Ibsen's lines, who have about us young children who look to us for guidance, should take heed that we so live that we be not the means of directing, by our example, the young and inexperienced along the road that is wide but which leads to death. In all things let us live as in the presence of the God revealed to humanity by the faith of Israel. Get rid of the silly notion that because Reform Judaism is practically a ceremonyless religion that it is, therefore, a God-less religion. Do not indulge the absurd idea that the Reform Jew need not approach God in prayer. Do not run away with the idea that if we make money for our children, no matter how it is made, we are really doing the best we can for

them. Bernick saw that life brings many blessings, the choicest of which no money can purchase. If you can still appeal to your children and they are still young enough to be influenced by you, then give them Truth and Freedom. Tell them facts, not lies. Let them be free enough to indulge their own noble ideals based upon your own fine example. If thus you build you will rear for them an enduring fabric; for truth and freedom are the only pillars on which society can be securely erected.

HENRIK IBSEN

IV. A Doll's House.*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Genesis i and ii.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis ii., 24).

You will remember that at the conclusion of the "Pillars of Society," Ibsen left for further consideration the expression of the profound truths made by the two leading characters, Consul Bernick and Lona Hessel, the woman he had rejected.

The Foundations of Progressive Society.

Bernick realized that it was through the influence of a good woman that he had been enabled to see into his own soul, to heed the appeal of his conscience, and to wash himself clean with the waters of public confession. He was, through this experience, prompted to say that, after all, women are the real pillars of society. But the woman, with keener intuition than the man, relieves herself of the

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

implied compliment, and remarks that the only columns on which we can safely build progressive society are Truth and Freedom.

One Play Suggests Another.

It is a characteristic of Ibsen that, while writing a play, he gives expression to some great generalization, some central truth, which later, because of its wide application, suggests the plot of another play. Thus we find in "The League of Youth" the seed from which grew "The Pillars of Society." Thus we find the great truth enunciated in "The Pillars of Society" which is the fundamental principle on which is reared "A Doll's House." Thus we find the character of Dr. Rank in "A Doll's House" suggesting a great truth which is to be emphasized in "Ghosts," which we shall discuss next week.

Ibsen Accused of Immoral Doctrine.

"A Doll's House" is, perhaps, the best known of all of Ibsen's plays and has proved of greatest interest to the great actresses as well as to the great critics. Because Ibsen delineates the character of a woman, who has been guilty of forgery, and who leaves the house of her husband in spite of his willingness to forgive her; because he depicts a mother who is generally considered so unmotherly that she deserts her children, he is called immoral. Not only is he so denominated because Nora Helmer acts as she does, but many of his plays have been characterized, by those who disagree with Ibsen, as either

tending to demoralization or abetting what is usually considered immorality.

Now, before we can fully understand the themes of the world's great dramatists we ought to understand what we mean by morality. We must learn to discriminate between the morality which is a part of the universe, which is the will of God as we say in religious life, and the morality which society usually accepts and enforces. We must learn to differentiate between that which is always true, and that which society and custom make true for us. There are two moralities, as I tried to show last year in my lecture on "The Merchant of Venice."

The Two Kinds of Morality.

In human experience two moralities exist side by side, just as most of us lead two lives. It may surprise you to hear that most of us lead double lives, but practically none of us are known to others as we know ourselves. There are even very few husbands who are known to their wives as they really are. There are just as few wives who are known to their husbands as they really are. Human beings are endowed with the ability to mask themselves, and most of us exceed admirably in doing so. Our inward beliefs, our true motives, our genuine selves, are rarely revealed to anyone except God and ourselves. In the same way there are two moralities. There are a morality of the store and a morality of the home. There are a morality of the office and a morality of the church. I heard yesterday, for instance, of a man who would not

permit anyone to talk business with him on Sunday; but it is the common belief that his life is, in every sense, rotten and filthy gauged by any moral standard.

The Path of Least Resistance.

There is a conventional morality which most of us accept. We are so glad to have other people do our thinking for us. It makes everything so nice and easy for us to have books of etiquette which tell us how to do the right thing in the right way. I feel convinced that one of the greatest obstacles to the moral life, one of the greatest menaces to the real development of men and women, is the foolish parent who bids those at home do everything precisely in the same way as everybody else does it, because "it is not good for people to depart from the beaten track." We tell our children to try to be as much like everybody else as they possibly can, while nature is urging the same children to be as unlike everybody else as they possibly can.

At the same time we discuss and argue about our own standards, to the end that our individual rights be safeguarded. In a word, we believe that our sacred personality, our individuality, is the greatest gift that God has given us; and yet we so try to mould our children, and we so endeavor to train them in accordance with the general level of conformity, that the very possession we so pride ourselves on having,—namely, personality, individuality,—is the very element we are most assiduously endeavoring to destroy in our children, because of our re-

spect for the conventional views of a so-called respectable society.

An Illustration.

May I illustrate my meaning? A few years ago very few persons hesitated to take a pass on any railroad, a pass between Pittsburgh and any other point. Most persons thought that, by such a gift, they were saving some money, and they really believed that there was no possible harm in accepting such a pass. On the contrary, he who would have objected to use a pass was considered queer and, perhaps, somewhat crazy. Passes were issued by the railroad companies to councilmen who offered them to other individuals, and only the fewest among us thought that there was any wrong in such a practice. Moreover, practically everybody believed this, and because everybody believed it, it was conceived to be perfectly right. In a word, we normally adopt, as our standard of what is right or wrong, what everybody is doing; and we think that, because everybody is doing it, it is right. There came a time in the history of our country when it was seen that every pass given by a Railroad was a bribe,—a bribe on the part of the Railroad to the man who used it. It was a bribe offered to the civic official who, in turn, used it as a bribe to the voter; and I doubt not the Railroads received large gifts from the people of the state in return for the passes which had been distributed.

Changing Standards of Morality.

Now, a few years ago nobody thought that wrong. It

was only since a moral awakening occurred in the United States that the people conceived that those who used passes, either by offering or accepting them, were offering bribes which robbed the rest of the people of a portion of their heritage. Finally the conscientious scruples of the people were expressed in a law that no Railroad might offer passes to any persons except employees. In this way the standard of morality rises, ever tending to approximate that standard of absolute morality which, for want of a better phrase,—and I admit I use this phrase to mask my ignorance, my lack of intelligence,—the will of God. I cannot give you a perfect definition of His holy will, but I can, at least, try to reveal to you what I have learned in my search after the absolute standard.

A Definition of Morality.

I believe that everything is moral which promotes, and advances, and develops, and humanizes, and improves, our life. This is my conception of morality; and I believe that anything which degrades, and debases, and devitalizes, and hinders, and destroys, human life is immoral. Why do I believe this? Because I read in our Holy Book, that wonderful Book in which we can find so much wisdom if we search, that the first law delivered to man by God was, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill, the earth." The aim of creation must ever be the procreation of progeny, the reproduction of the human species, under the highest, noblest and best circumstances. I care not how neurasthenic women regard this point of view; but I believe that I am uttering the truth of God when

I urge that the universe itself pleads, that our moral sentiments demand,—and God has laid us under the obligation,—such reproduction of the human species; for the world ends that day on which men and women refuse to reproduce themselves.

There is nothing nasty, there is nothing vulgar, there is nothing common, there is nothing bestial, about this suggestion, as some over-refined, over-civilized psychopathics would have us believe. I am convinced that only the minds and moods of neurotics, only a stupid regard for conventionalities dear to the puny souls of sexless and unnatural women can ever lead us to believe that Scripture erred in its first command to mankind. Such a propensity, so opposed to every natural impulse and so contrary to the primal laws ordained of God, can only be natural in those who have forsaken nature's ways, or are so devoid of the virility essential to the mothers of the human race, or are so cowardly and retrogressive that they lack the courage to assume the duties and obligations of parenthood, or are so soft and dainty and self-engrossed that they are unfit to exercise the high calling of motherhood.

Morality and Life.

Morality, then, is that which tends to reproduce, to bless, to consecrate, to advance, to humanize, to promote, human life. You may think of any moral purpose,—I have long considered this test,—which has been sanctified by the counsel of the best and wisest and noblest teachers

of mankind, and you will find that it tends to life. You may think of anything which, by common consent, the best and wisest and noblest men and women conceive to be immoral and you will find that, therein, lies the seed of death. Kindly think this out for yourselves, because I ought not do your thinking for you. Only because Ibsen caught a glimpse of the eternal moralities, while most of us live on the low plane of the conventional moralities, do some call him immoral. But tell me, you who have thoughtfully read the works of Ibsen, have you ever read any passage in any of his writings in which you find him scoffing at the eternal moralities, in which you find him advocating those things which tend to destroy life, to undermine it, to degrade it, to devitalize it?

Ibsen Asks Questions.

You may find that his is not the attitude of the constructive teacher who offers a solution of the difficulties he reveals. He himself says, "I do not answer, I only question." He is a sphinx asking its eternal questions. He does not undertake to solve problems. He leaves that for society, for the individual, if you like, but he feels that he has done his duty by indicating the difficulty, the problem, the question. He lays bare the existing facts, and he places his finger, in unmistakable fashion, on the weaknesses of men, on the evils of social life, as if to say, "These are the facts; what are you going to do with them?" If one would have had the opportunity of asking him what he would suggest, we might have learned more than we do; but we would not, then, make such a

mistake as did Walter Besant when he wrote a sequel to "A Doll's House." But as the problem is left for our consideration, something, though not, perhaps, the maximum of good, is gained if we get men and women to think, to reflect, to consider.

To Think Is the Moral Act.

After all if we grant that that is moral which promotes and advances human life, we cannot leave out of this consideration the vast influence which *thought* should exercise over all we do. If Ibsen makes us think, his is a service highly moral. Men like the late Professor William James hold that to think is the supremely moral act. He tells teachers that a moral act "consists in the effort of attention by which we hold fast to an idea which, but for that effort of attention, would be driven out of the mind by the other psychological tendencies that are there. To think, in short, is the secret of will, just as it is the secret of memory." The most frequent excuse offered by those who act sinfully and carelessly is, "I never thought;" and the most frequent expression of disapproval takes the form, "Why didn't you think? What are you here for but to think?" All of us know that as much harm is done by want of thought as by want of heart; yet the appeal for forgiveness is generally couched in form of an excuse, "I didn't think that the consequences would be what they are."

Ibsen wants us to think. He frames his problem in such a way that, though some people do not care to see his plays or read them, because "he leaves such a bad

taste in our mouth,'' nevertheless, the problem demands a personal solution whether we care to consider it or not. We should, however, never forget that when the daughter has made her fatal mistake, or when the son has taken the wrong step, or when the man or woman sees the whole house tumbling down, a much worse taste is left in the mouth. Nothing is ever gained by blinking a serious moral question. If we are to become men and women and to do the work of men and women, we ought to have the courage to look such questions squarely in the face. This is all Ibsen tries to do. He takes certain types of human beings, deftly weaves them into a story, and then leaves this story for us to decide whether this one or the other one has acted correctly and whether, under like circumstances, we would have done what was done by the characters he creates. At least that is my understanding of this play, ''A Doll's House.''

Characters in the Play.

There are only five important characters in it. We have the hero, Helmer, who has struggled hard to make his way in the world, and at last succeeds. He was in very humble circumstances when he married the heroine, the wonderful girl, Nora, a charming, womanly woman, a real feminine type. She loves him and he loves her, and they marry because they love. He seems worthy of her love, for he is the soul of honor, a very high-minded man. His conception of commercial honesty does credit to a church deacon of the noblest type. Helmer falls sick, but though very ill he is so proud that he would not take help

from anyone. He would willingly fall and fail in health until he died rather than invite the sorrowing which comes of borrowing. All through the play he retains his high conception of commercial integrity, and when he succeeds and obtains the high position of manager of the bank he proves himself worthy of it because he is ever a reliable, clean, upright man of a fine sense of commercial probity, and who will not, under any circumstances, take a shoelatchet which is not his or which he has not earned by honest toil. Indeed, Helmer is an honest man.

Nora Helmer.

His wife, Nora, differs from him in many ways. She is delightfully attractive. No man can see Nora Helmer on the stage without admiring her femininity. Everything that suggests the attraction of the opposite sex is evoked by her subtle sweetness of manner. She typifies that organic affinity which an attractive woman exercises over the man who loves her. She is beautiful of face, lithe in form, gifted with wonderful facility of speech. She has all the charm, the daintiness, the sweet character of a moral woman. She has, however, no individuality apart from her husband, having been used, both in her father's home and in her own, to regard the man as the responsible party.

She looks like a woman but acts like a child, the doll-wife of a strong man who, she feels, would protect her life and sacred honor to the last drop of his blood, to the last breath of his body. She has been trained to flatter her husband by her devotion, and she considers him al-

ways before herself. She exerts that indefinable influence in the home which makes it altogether different because she is there. In a word, she is a type of the heroine in the novels of the writer, Miss Braddon, who died last week, and whose heroines exerted a great influence over my opinions concerning women. For, I used to read her books with great delight, and I indulged the belief that all women were like her heroines. At least Nora is like them, but with this vital difference,—Nora has a moral sense which has been sadly under-developed.

Nora Not a Type of All Women.

There are some persons mean enough to say that Ibsen thought that all women had only a partial moral sense, and that he painted Nora Helmer, not as an individual case, but as the type of woman, in that all women, like Nora, cannot tell the truth, are dishonest and false. These critics also say that Ibsen would have us believe that in all women we find the Tartuffe characteristics; for woman, they say, is a born hypocrite. They who speak thus, I think, are the misanthropes and misogynists. They speak not, in a word, as those among us who have learned to know women either through our mothers, our wives, our sisters, and I pray God, through our children. However, Nora belongs to that particular type of woman who can lie just as easily as she can eat, and who, in later life, becomes either the most devoted of lovers or the most consummate of actresses. Her husband, for instance, asks her whether she has been eating maccaroons which she had been forbidden; although she has the bag of macca-

roons in her muff, and the crumbs are still on her lips, she quaintly lies to him and says she has not partaken of them.

The Absence of Moral Responsibility.

Nora is cursed with this fateful characteristic, but she has in her nature vast depths which are not sounded by her husband. For, when he is sick, she goes to Nils Krogstad, a money lender, and borrows some twelve hundred crowns, in order to take her husband away on a long holiday so that he may recover his health. Krogstad is perfectly willing to lend her the money, but he must have the note endorsed by a responsible party. Her father is a man of some means, and the money-lender is willing to lend the sum if he can secure the father's signature to the note. He knows that Nora will not go to her father, and he also knows that her father is sick unto death.

Nora does not realize that there is the slightest harm in signing her father's name to the scrap of paper. When she is expected to exercise her moral sense of responsibility she fails. Long dependence on her husband's judgment has robbed her of the ability to discriminate. She does not comprehend that to sign her own father's name is forgery, and that forgery is a crime against the state which will make her amenable to the law of the land. She is to learn her lesson later on; but no matter what else I have to say of her this morning, I would not have you believe that any man, who reads Ibsen and who possesses the slightest moral sense, attempts to condone what the

woman did. For, we cannot, if we are to live in social relations, but condemn such an act as that which was committed by her. We must have honor and honesty in commerce and trade. Indeed, if a human soul is to find happiness on earth we must condemn in every way possible such a delinquency as that committed by Nora, although we realize that the attitude of the family toward the offender will be, and ought to be, different from that taken by society in its own defence.

Other Characters.

Then we have Dr. Rank, a very interesting character, —a man who is sick, a man whose "poor innocent spine must do penance for his father's wild oats, especially when the luckless spine never had any good of them." He has long been a close friend of the Helmer family, but he knows that he is about to die, and before death yearns to receive the expression of human love. He understands Nora and learns how she is deceiving her husband. When the truth of the forgery is told to him, and he seeks to offer her the opportunity of release, he also endeavors to force his attentions upon her. He understands her, at least so he thinks, but this volatile creature is too fine for his analysis.

We also have Nils Krogstad, the villain of the play, who has also been guilty of forgery, and who, on this account, is not trusted by Nora's husband, the bank manager. He is striving to rehabilitate himself by seeking to remain in the employ of Helmer's bank, but he is to fail in his hope because a woman, a most delightful friend of

Nora, and one of Ibsen's fine women, Mrs. Linden, is to be given his place at the request of Nora, who seeks to help this dear lady. For, Mrs. Linden is a type of the woman who has ever aroused man's reverence, and she it is who, at the psychological moment, with woman's wonderful intuition and with woman's splendid ability to sacrifice, offers herself as the means of saving her young and inexperienced friend. With this material Ibsen builds up the story of "A Doll's House."

The Opening Scene.

It is Christmas eve on which we are introduced into the Helmer home. To the outward eye we are introduced into an earthly paradise. A husband, a wife and three darling children are living in a domicile which may justly be called "Heartsease," in which, in an apparently refined manner, the parents are living the marriage law by loving, honoring and cherishing each other, with a flavor of obedience on the part of the wife, Nora.

Nora, who has been her father's doll, is now her husband's doll, and their home is a doll's house in which the children are puppets and the mother a plaything of the man. How can society ever realize the "Third Kingdom," if women and girls are only dolls? The play must, therefore, develop circumstances which will arouse the dormant powers of the woman. She must be awakened and thus regenerated. She must learn the law of equal responsibility which follows from the law of equal freedom,—Ibsen's basis of the social fabric.

Nora's Eyes Are Opened.

In spite of the fact that Nora has toiled long and wearily to pay off the note which Krogstad holds, she is happy in her work, in her home, and in the company of her children. But her happiness is to be rudely shocked, her eyes are to be opened so that she may search her soul. Everything has conspired to rob her of initiative; now the events are to happen which will force her to individual effort.

Krogstad, who has served a term in prison and who is striving to redeem himself, is dismissed from Helmer's bank and now seeks Nora's aid to retrieve his lost position. But Nora has, unknowingly, secured his place for Mrs. Linden, who, in earlier days, was an object of affection to Krogstad, but who, for various reasons, had married another man. The forger threatens to expose Nora if she does not secure for him his lost position. She sneers at the threat, but, nevertheless, is frightened. She eloquently pleads with Helmer in behalf of the unhappy man, and is shocked when he refuses to consider Krogstad, and when she hears his condemnation of forgery of which the money-lender has been guilty. Her eyes are opened to the gravity of her own offence and to the seriousness of Krogstad's threat to drag her down into the gutter with him. The forged scrap of paper he holds is, indeed, a whip he can use to her undoing in the eyes of her strictly honest husband, and also of the law.

The Woman No Longer a Doll.

Nora, in that moment, ceases to be a doll. She grows

into woman's estate the more rapidly because she dreads to believe that her husband is right when he says that "dishonesty nearly always comes from dishonest mothers." Krogstad threatens to write a letter to Helmer acquainting him with the wife's dereliction. Nora pleads with Mrs. Linden for advice. She turns to Dr. Rank, only to find him anxious to pay court to her. But deep down in her heart is the conviction that, though her husband learn of her delinquency, he will, out of his sensuous love for her, shield and save her. She would raise the money and pay Krogstad. But from whom can she now get it? While thus pondering, the money-lender drops the threatened letter in the mail-box. The woman is a doll no longer. She must now fight for her life.

Rapidly Developing Events.

At first she is tempted to commit suicide rather than bring ruin on her husband. But events proceed more rapidly than she can control them. Helmer enters and is about to open the letter-box when Nora prevents him, distracts his attention by practicing the tarantella she is to dance at her neighbor's Christmas ball, and exacts a promise that he will not read his mail until after the dance. In the meantime Mrs. Linden departs to plead with Krogstad that he demand the return of his letter unopened; but no one who witnesses Nora's anguish of soul can fail to see that, if she is rising to the heavenly heights of a noble womanhood, she is being carried aloft in the fiery chariot of sorrow. Christina Linden fails to meet Krogstad until it is too late to prevent the letter

falling into Helmer's hands. Prepared to accept the forger as her husband if she can save her beautiful girl friend, she is prevented by the fact that the man has left town. There is nothing for Nora to do but to await developments. "After all," she says, "there is something glorious in waiting for the miracle."

Before Nora dances her tarantella on the morrow night Krogstad and Cristina have resolved to wed, but the fatal letter is not withdrawn from the box. Mrs. Linden has decided that it is best for the husband and wife to come to a full understanding before she induces Krogstad to send back to Helmer the forged note, the sole incriminating evidence existing against Nora. A crisis has occurred in the psyche, the soul, of the younger woman and, all things considered, it is deemed wisest to carry the conflict to its end rather than have her live a lie forever.

The Denouement.

After the dance Helmer and Nora are alone. The husband's sensual appetite has been awakened by the delicacy, the refinement, the graces of her he calls his "little song-bird," his "pretty lark." Never have their souls been further apart than at that moment. The man, respectable and honest, is the incarnation of the human animal; the woman, a sinner against society's ethics, is struggling to find her soul. The denouement comes. Nora expects a miracle, but no miracle happens. No sooner has Helmer read Krogstad's letter than his outraged sense

of honesty explodes in the most violent vituperation. He is not so maddened, however, because his wife has sinned against God and man. He is frantic with rage because she has involved *him*. He sees only how *his* interests, *his* name, *his* honor, and *his* position, have been imperiled, and in his mad anger he threatens to take the children away from her, although, for the sake of appearance, he will allow her to remain in his home. Abuse, anger, condemnation, are heaped on her,—but not a suggestion of self-sacrifice does he make.

The Expected Miracle.

The interview is very painful, but the expected miracle does not happen. Nora had fondly hoped that when he, who had called her "his love, his lark, his songbird," would learn the worst, he would have said to her, "My darling, is it true that you have made this mistake?" To which she would have replied, dropping her eyes and gasping for breath, "Yes; but forgive me!" And then her husband, she had hoped, would have said, "Never mind, dearest of women, you are not the first woman who has made a mistake, nor will you be the last. I love you, and love drives out all selfishness. I will, for your sake, bear everything. The world shall know that not you, but I, committed the forgery. I will suffer for you." But no such scene takes place. Helmer violently upbraids his wife, and never gives a thought of her, until he received Krogstad's letter of apology and the forged note. Only then, when he realizes that he is saved, through Mrs. Linden's sacrifice, though he knows it not, does he recover

his equanimity and tender forgiveness to the berated wife. His burning words have, however, seared her soul. The miracle she had fondly expected did not happen; but is not the sudden growth of her soul a greater miracle than that which she had anticipated?

The Spiritual Growth in Nora.

Indeed some astonishing development has taken place else the following conversation had been impossible:

Nora. Does not one thing strike you as we sit here?
Helmer. What should strike me?
Nora. We have been married eight years. Does it not strike you that this is the first time we two, you and I, man and wife, have talked together seriously?
Helmer. Seriously! What do you call seriously?
Nora. During eight whole years, and more—ever since the day we first met—we have never exchanged one serious word about serious things.
Helmer. Was I always to trouble you with the cares you could not help me to bear?
Nora. I am not talking of cares. I say that we have never yet set ourselves seriously to get to the bottom of anything.
Helmer. Why, my dearest Nora, what have you to do with serious things?
Nora. There we have it! You have never understood me. * * * I have had great injustice done me, Torvald; first by my father, and then by you.

Unsounded Depths of Soul.

With the keen edge of his cutting remarks Helmer has bared Nora's soul to her own sight, and for the first time she has learned the difference between love and lust. The foundations of the doll's house are being shaken, and they fall as Nora utters her sterling truths about her own

marriage,—statements all too true about all too many other marriages. When she remarks that she has been treated unjustly, both by her father and her husband, the colloquy which ensues reveals the hitherto unsounded depths of a woman's soul.

Helmer. What! By your father and me? * * * By us, who have loved you more than all the world?

Nora. **(Shaking her head)** You have never loved me. You only thought it amusing to be in love with me.

Helmer. Why, Nora, what a thing to say!

Nora. Yes, it is so, Torvald. While I was at home with father, he used to tell me all his opinions, (and I held the same opinions). If I had others I said nothing about them, because he would not have liked it. He used to call me his doll-wife, and played with me as I played with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house—

Helmer. What an expression to use about our marriage!

Nora. **(Undisturbed).** I mean I passed from father's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your taste; and I got the same tastes as you; or I pretended to—I don't know which—both ways, perhaps; sometimes one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it now, I seem to have been living here like a beggar, from hand to mouth. I lived by performing tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and father have done me a great wrong. It is your fault that my life has come to nothing.

Man's and Woman's Points of View.

Nora has scaled the heights now that the truth is revealed to her. She must, therefore, have liberty to think and act for herself. The vast chasm which divides the husband and the wife may be gathered from Nora's answer to Helmer when she protests that he ought to have performed her anticipated miracle. He says that "no man

sacrifices his honor, even for one he loves." But she replies, "Millions of women have done so." She sees that she has never been really happy. Her soul is overwrought, and we gather from the following words a suggestion of what is passing therein:

Helmer. Why, Nora, how unreasonable and ungrateful you are! Have you not been happy here?

Nora. No, never. I thought I was; but I never was.

Helmer. Not—not happy!

Nora. No; only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing but a play-room. Here I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I used to be papa's doll-child. And the children, in their turn, have been my dolls. I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torvald.

Helmer. There is some truth in what you say, exaggerated and overstrained though it be. But henceforth it shall be different. Play-time is over; now comes the time for education.

Woman's Personality and Wife's Duty.

Her self-respect is wounded; her faith is shaken. What can she do? Whither shall she go? She can only make a wife's declaration of independence, for she must find her own way if she is to realize a wife's holiest duties.

Nora. What do you consider my holiest duties?

Helmer. Do I need to tell you that? Your duties to your husband and your children.

Nora. I have other duties equally sacred.

Helmer. Impossible! What duties do you mean?

Nora. My duties towards myself.

Helmer. Before all else you are a wife and a mother.

Nora. That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are—or

> at least that I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But henceforth I can't be satisfied with what most people say, and what is in books. I must think things out for myself, and try to get clear about them.

The lightning flash has revealed unseen verities to the souls of both of them. Nora realizes that, in spite of being Helmer's wife for eight years, "she has been living with a strange man and has borne him three children." Helmer, on the other hand, now finds that he "has the strength to become another man." Calmly and dispassionately, with a fine sense of thankfulness for all his kindness to her, she pleads the cause of individuality in woman and wife, and decides that only in parting, perhaps but for a time, lies the possibility of her salvation. She who was good enough to be a wife as long as she could satisfy the amorous moods of a husband, as long as he could find no fault in her, as long as he was satisfied with her suppression of herself in obedience to his egotism, dare not remain under his roof if she is not to continue to be a mere doll in a pretty doll's-house.

The Renunciation.

She must find herself. She must be an entity. If marriage is not to be a degradation, if it is to be a sanctified relation, if it is to be a union of souls as well as a binding of persons to make one flesh, then the woman must be as much a part of it as the man. A contact and a contract that succeed in making everything of the man and little or nothing of the woman cannot be that rela-

tionship for which a man should leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife. The union which debases woman can only lead to her ineffectual effort to be a true mother to her children. Nora feels, therefore, that she must renounce her comfort and the protection of her home; she must be willing even to refuse her eyes the joy of seeing her beautiful children. If marriage is to be sacramental in its character, then both must so change "that communion between us shall be a marriage." For no marriage can be holy in the sight of God where the woman is only the sport and toy and plaything of the man. The end draws nigh. What will she do? She turns to leave her all. Can she do it? She goes from the room. Will she turn back? The reverberation of a heavy door closing downstairs is the answer.

The Education of Woman.

In Ibsen's play there is more than the recital of the serious consequences of a foolish woman's criminal error which no one seeks to condone. Here we find his first appeal for woman's true education for life and duty. For unnumbered generations man has regarded her as the weaker vessel, fit only for the love which he, more romantically than truthfully, has asserted is her birthright. Love, yes; but not the love which has so often been a cloak for the vilest passions from which woman has found no relief or release. The part woman plays in the economy of society is as important as man's. She is his equal and helpmate. He is her equal and friend. If, therefore, woman is ever to succeed in being all she ought for society

the day of her enfranchisement must soon arrive; she must be man's helpmate, not his doll. She must be educated for the duties of wife and mother; she must be trained for the holy calling upon which she enters when she accepts matrimony.

How Society Errs.

In the average case a young girl accepts the offer of marriage from a young man, and before God they pledge themselves one to the other to rear children and to build new and helpful influences for social life. But what does the average girl know of a wife's obligations and duties? How much does the average young married man know of domestic responsibilities? What does the average young girl know of the sacred functions of motherhood when first she weds and bears a child? What does she know of the whole revolution which takes place when she ceases to be a single woman and becomes a mother? How has she been prepared for the life work of wife and mother,—a task exceeding all tasks in importance and difficulty?

The lad who is to be an engineer, a lawyer, a physician, an economist, attends college. The lad who is to be trained as a merchant is sent to the basement to sweep the floor as an initial step in the knowledge of the details of a great business. The driver of a locomotive or an automobile is required to serve some kind of an apprenticeship. But the woman who is to be the mother, who is to train children for society, is taken from her mother's side and delivered, very often, into the keeping of a coarse

and vulgar soul, such as we all too often find in our present social arrangements; and this delicate and sensitive creature is expected to be fully alive to all the phases of a profession which you and I, with our long experience, have now found to be the most intricate and complex of all undertakings. The man is trained; the woman is left untrained.

Religion for Woman.

We think that the one thing needful for woman is religion. We turn the church over to her. Boastfully we men declare that religion will keep woman on the path of rectitude and that religion, which so many men affect to condemn, is good enough for woman. We tell the dear things that religion is an infallible guide for them, though we ourselves despise it. What if women, in their heart of hearts, feel about the religion which men loathe, or appear so to do, as Nora Helmer did? What if, in answer to their husbands, they should speak as she did?

Helmer. Are you clear about your place in your own home? Have you not an infallible guide in questions like these? Have you not religion?

Nora. Oh, Torvald, I don't really know what religion is.

Helmer. What do you mean?

Nora. I know nothing but what Pastor Hansen told me when I was confirmed. He explained that religion was this and that. When I get away from all this and stand alone, I will look into that matter, too. I will see whether what he taught me is right, or, at any rate, whether it is right for me.

Helmer. Oh, this is unheard of! And from so young a woman! But if religion cannot keep you right, let me appeal to your conscience—for I suppose you have some moral

feeling? or, answer me: perhaps you have none?

Nora. Well, Torvald, it's not easy to say. I really don't know—I am at sea about these things. I only know that I think quite differently from you about them. I hear, too, that the laws are different from what I thought; but I can't believe that they can be right. It appears that a woman has no right to spare her dying father, or to save her husband's life! I don't believe that.

Living for Others.

In the doll's house in which so many of us are still living, the problems clarified in the play may still be found. Possibly many of us say with the ancient Pharisee, "Thank God I am not like other men!" But our boastfulness is not based on fact. The "compact majority" are fairly well all alike. Men force women to surrender their individuality in marriage, and women are willing to have it so, not because they believe in the self-renunciation demanded of them, but because it is the easiest way; or they yield because of Mrs. Grundy. We do not live for ourselves; we live for others, and not in the best sense of this phrase. We do not live for others in the sense that we are prepared to bring sacrifice for the good of others; but we live for others in the sense that we dare not be ourselves, that we are fearful of the criticism of others. Ibsen opposes this attitude and refuses to regard it as final.

I am far from believing that, after all the struggle of the ages to introduce a state of marriage that shall commend itself to really moral persons, we should go to the lengths suggested by long-haired men and short-haired women. But I do mean to say that we shall never make

ideal progress in society so long as we fail to rear the social fabric on the pillars of Truth and Freedom. The woman who still lives in a modern sort of harem with her one man must be emancipated from the thraldom of antiquated notions about the education of woman. There can be no real moral progress until woman is emancipated, and she can only be emancipated by producing in her the same sense of responsibility as society now develops in man.

The New Woman.

I have no fear of that type of woman who, now and again, stirs society to its depths, the member of the rotten four hundreds which a degenerate and idle class has produced, the painted woman, the woman of the courtesan type. I have no fear that that type will breed and multiply in the future. Where we now find in some communities that her kind tends to appear in hitherto cleanly circles, it is due to the fact that that woman is a slavish imitator, and not because she is free. I have no fear that this vile and disgusting type, which every chivalrous man abhors and abominates because she is so unlike his revered mother, will continue to increase. She surely will not if society places her under responsibilities instead of making her fit only to be the inmate of a doll's house. These excrescences on the fair body of womankind are survivals of a class of females who belong to a past age, and who have not yet been fitted to the demands and duties of the new era. Give woman education! Give her real opportunities! Deliver her from the bondage of economic

slavery! Let the man join her in developing a religion fit for free people! Develop in her the social sense of responsibility, and we shall find that together man and woman will become one flesh in the endeavor to place under society the secure pillars of Truth and Freedom, without which we may have a union of human beings in each country, but never a society fit for true men and women.

HENRIK IBSEN

V. Ghosts*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel xviii.

Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; but showing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments. (Exodus xx., 5, 6).

When Ibsen read the criticisms which appeared in the magazines and papers concerning his play, "A Doll's House," which was discussed here last week, it was natural that he should not hesitate to strike back at the enemy and to defend his own position. People in Scandinavia and in Denmark, as well as in Germany and in England and later in America, who witnessed a performance of "A Doll's House," were greatly shocked by Ibsen's preachment. It was generally agreed that Nora was wrong and that her husband Torvald was right.

Criticism of Nora Helmer Led to a Reply.

We should recall that Mr. Helmer had asked his wife to remember that she was a mother and a wife, and

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

that she, with her "pestilent individualism," had replied that she was a woman before she was a mother and a wife. She, moreover, had asserted that Helmer had outraged her sense of self-respect, and when he remarked that erring children generally learn their evil ways from bad mothers, she felt that she was not fit to rear the children of such a good, and honest and upright man. She, therefore, felt that it was altogether fit and proper for her to go away from her own house in order to think the situation over, to work out her own salvation, and no longer to live as "the kept wife" of a man who did not respect her.

Her attitude was revolutionary. We never read of women acting like that in the Bible. Before Ibsen's day one rarely, if ever, heard of a preacher in a consecrated Christian or Jewish church advising women to live their own independent lives. Women had hitherto been commanded to be subservient to their husbands, and to understand that, once having put their names to the marriage contract, its provisions were to be sacredly observed. Experience shows that society has ever held that the contract is binding on the woman; but, as the contract has been drawn up by man, he reserves for himself his own method of interpretation.

Ibsen's Revolutionary Doctrine.

Thus it happens that the sins flagrantly committed by married men are very often overlooked by a society in whose development the man has publicly had the most

important part to play; while the slightest departure from the terms of the contract on the part of the woman is generally visited with condign disapproval. In a word, as society is organized, the Marguerites, no matter what be the motive of their sin, are blamed, whereas the Fausts are accepted and approved. The man, who tries to justify a woman who leaves her husband because they have had what the world calls a quarrel, will not readily be approved by a Philistine society. Society likes the dead level. It distrusts those who rise above that dead level, or fall below it. Society would have everybody practically alike. Individuality is hated by society, and therefore the pillars of society were shaken when Nora left her husband and set the example of a modern Vashti.

Ibsen Replies With "Ghosts."

Ibsen returns to the fray and defends himself by writing a play in which he shows his smug, respectable opponents, who really pollute society, what *they* think Nora should have done. Hence in "Ghosts" he depicts a character who is the exact opposite of Nora, a woman who has a husband who is not like Helmer; a woman who would, under normal conditions, have a perfect right to leave her husband because he is a brute and a sensuous profligate. Ibsen portrays the type of woman who is subservient to society's will, who is obedient to society's behests, who is a self-sacrificing, self-denying wife and mother, especially so since she knows the kind of man her husband really is. "Behold," he seems to say, "O ye sinful saints of society, behold before you a

woman who acts in the manner you prescribe! Knowing the character of her husband, she leaves him not. Understanding his depraved nature, she withdraws from him not. Think you that she acts as a free, self-respecting woman should act? If so, let us consider what her course of conduct involves!''

The Age-Long Problem Discussed.

Dealing with such a household, he is forced to present one of the oldest problems that has ever vexed the human race,—the relationship of parent and child, the consequences of parental mistakes, the results of parental wrong-doing. He is compelled to show how the sins of the fathers, literally *the sins of the fathers,* are visited upon their children. In doing this he is necessarily constrained to uncover a host of human sins of the deadliest character. He must search the human soul with candles. He must bare human motives and disclose human passions of which we have no reason to be proud. A play dealing with such a theme will not make light or delightful reading. It may prove thought-provoking and salutary; but it will not be exhilarating. Its atmosphere will resemble the mist and fog and rain and gloom, which are actually ever-present during the time represented by the action of the play. Yet we cannot read ''Ghosts'' thoughtfully and sympathetically without being improved by it.

The Law of Heredity.

It emphasizes a law of nature, which is the express will of God, by showing us how the thoughts, the im-

pulses, the motives, the ideas, the ideals and the deeds, as well as the blood of the father and the mother, are transmitted by impartial and irrefragable laws of nature from the parents to the child. Since the very earliest time when this law of nature was first discovered, the God, who insisted upon the fulfillment of this law, has been called a cruel and wicked God. Indeed, it has been urged, He is a jealous God, a God unworthy of worship, since He unjustly afflicts the child who is innocent because of the sin of the parent who is guilty. Because, already in ancient times, the multitude in Israel did not agree that because the fathers had eaten sour grapes the teeth of the children should be set on edge, Ezekiel the prophet delivered the great sermon read here this morning.

Sins of Fathers and Mothers Are Inherited by Child.

In all ages, in every land, some there have been who have endeavored to justify the ways of God, seeing that, whether we wish it or not, the law of nature is inviolable and absolute, and the sins of the father are visited upon the child, as are also the sins of the mother. A mistaken interpretation of the Bible text has led many to believe that only the sins of the father are visited upon children; and, therefore, I advisedly add the words, as are also the sins of the mother. The child is the product of both parents, and the make-up of both is an elementary constituent of each child. You have, possibly, heard the story of that child who was taught by its mother to pray every night before retiring, and to end its prayer with

the words, "God bless so and so, and God bless mother, and God bless father; and God, please keep your eye on father because he needs watching!" One night the mother, who always heard her child say its prayers, was surprised when she heard the little one end its prayer thus: "God bless so and so, and God bless father and keep your eye on father because he needs watching; and God bless mother; and God, please keep your eye on mother because she could stand a little watching also." We are so used to hear that the sins of the *father* are visited upon the children that we fail to realize that the Hebrew term includes the *mothers* too, and that we should translate the Scriptural verse, "The sins of the *parents* are visited upon their offspring."

Cruel to Be Kind.

It is very late in this twentieth century for anyone to attempt to justify God for the truth of this law revealed by the Bible. The law is absolute, just, fair and equitable. We are told that God will visit the sins of the parents upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. We are also told that God will visit the virtues of the parents upon the children for a thousand generations. Now, a God who visits evil for only three or four generations, and who visits good for a thousand generations, is not only not cruel, but is surely very kind; or if men insist that He is cruel, He is cruel in order to be kind. We should never forget that we are nowhere advised to be wicked, but everywhere counselled to be righteous. If wickedness produces bitter

fruit who is to blame? If parents are forewarned that their sins will blast their children, will ruin those most beloved of all in the world, can we rightfully blame God whose will we violate when we sin?

The Seed and the Harvest.

Every deed is a seed; every thought is a seed; and out of a seed something will inevitably grow. If the deed be a good deed, it is normal and natural for us to believe that out of that seed something good will grow. If the deed be a deed of evil it is normal and natural for us to believe that the result of that seed will be like unto the seed itself. The harvest is always of the same character as the sowing, and it would not be well for us if it were otherwise. Suppose the men who will soon proceed to cultivate the great wheat areas of the West, who will till the ground and drop the seed into the soil, were to find that stones would grow up; would we care to eat stones for bread? We base our life on this earth upon the impartiality and reliability of that natural law which makes like produce like.

Were it otherwise, this world would not be a fit place to live in; for no man could plan anything with certainty or live with any degree of security. Either God is a magician and He plays with us fast and loose, making fools of us; or He is a Father whose will and pleasure must be fulfilled. Having revealed His law unto us it is not for us to disobey, but to obey. He has given us our five senses, and He is everlastingly advising

us that they are the avenues by which the outer world may be realized by our consciousness, He has also endowed us with a will by which to control our every act. Most of us who have had the good fortune of receiving from some learned teacher the results of his vast experience, have been told that the making of our life is in our own hands. We cannot righteously transfer moral responsibility; for every individual is master of his own destiny, the captain of his own soul.

Products of Parents and Long Ancestry.

While, however, so much of our life lies within the sphere of our own control, it must also be remembered that each of us is the product of many antecedent generations. There is no such thing as Biogenesis or Parthenogenesis as far as we are concerned. It may be that, at one period in the world's history, theology led the people to believe that a human being could be created without a father or a mother; but sensible people in the twentieth century have long since ceased to believe such myths. We believe that every human individual has come into this world in exactly the same manner; that the process of generation has ever been the same since man appeared on this earth, and that it will forever continue to be the same.

Ancestry a Geometrical Progression.

Every child may be graphically represented by the meeting point of a wedge. As we proceed up the sides of the wedge we find points on either side further and

further apart. By joining these points by line above line from side to side of the wedge we shall have a pictorial representation of our ancestry. Thus we see a representation of the fact that each child is the product of a father and a mother, who in turn are the products of their fathers and mothers; that its grandparents are product of their parents, etc., etc. Thus you can see for yourselves that we may trace our ancestry in a geometrical proportion whose constant ratio is two. One child is the product of two parents, of four grandparents, of eight great-grandparents, of sixteen great-great-grandparents, and so on. Were we able to trace our ancestry back as far as twenty-one generations we should find that each of us is the product of more than a million ancestors, and that we, therefore, bear in our bodies the tendencies and traits of our forbears.

Like Parents, Like Child.

That is how we come into being. That is the stuff each of us has in our individual system. The stuff is either tainted or clean; and whether it be tainted or clean depends upon the character of those who have endowed us with the material of our bodies. Healthy forbears will,—their blood being pure, their nervous system being unvitiated, their bodies being virile,—normally give birth to children whose blood is pure, whose bodies are vigorous, whose nerves are strong. On the other hand, those who have been roués and rakes and profligates, those who have spent interesting (?) times with the strange woman described in the seventh chapter of

"Proverbs" will, probably, bring to their own homes the filth they have themselves contracted, given to their wives as a wedding present, and continued to their children as an unfatherly gift. We are asked to honor our fathers and our mothers, and we ought to honor our fathers and mothers. I would have no boy or girl, certainly none whom I can influence, do other than honor father and mother. But we are not asked, and God has no right to ask us, to honor mere creators. We are not asked by God to honor human brutes who have infiltrated their vile filth into our bodies, who have cursed us when they should have blessed us, and who have polluted us when they should have given us life and strength and health.

"Ghosts" Received With a Shudder.

This is the truth which Ibsen wished to bring home to every parent. They were fathers who found fault with him. He answered them by saying, as it were, "I will show you the life so many fathers are leading, and then you shall tell me whether I am right or wrong." Thus he came to write "Ghosts," and I presume he could not lightly forget the reception it was given. I have in my hand a copy of George Bernard Shaw's "Quintessence of Ibsenism," in which the author has reprinted a few of the criticisms which appeared in the London papers after the first performance in the English capital. Mr. Archer, the English translator of Ibsen, suggests that these excerpts be used "as a nucleus for a Dictionary of Abuse modelled upon the Wagner 'Schimpf-

Lexicon.'" Let me read you a few of these choice morsels:

"This mass of vulgarity, egotism, coarseness, and absurdity."—*Daily Telegraph.* "Unutterably offensive. . . . Prosecution under Lord Campbell's Act. . . . Abominable piece. . . . Scandalous."—*Standard.* "Naked loathsomeness. . . . Most dismal and repulsive production."—*Daily News.* "Revoltingly suggestive and blasphemous. . . . Characters either contradictory in themselves, uninteresting or abhorrent."—*Daily Chronicle.* "A repulsive and degrading work."—*Queen.* "Morbid, unhealthy, unwholesome, and disgusting story. . . . A piece to bring the stage into disrepute and dishonor with every right-thinking man and woman."—*Lloyd's.* "Merely dull dirt long drawn out." *Hawk.* "Most loathsome of all Ibsen's plays. . . . Garbage and offal."—*Truth.* "Ibsen's putrid play called Ghosts. . . . So loathsome an enterprise."—*Academy.* "As foul and filthy a concoction as has ever been allowed to disgrace the boards of an English theater. . . . Dull and disgusting. . . . Nastiness and malodorousness laid on thickly as with a trowel."—*Era.* "Noisome corruption."—*Stage.*

Ibsen's Honesty.

What did Ibsen do? He simply took a few characters of such individuals as he had met in his life and put them on the stage, placing them with that superb stagecraft of which he was a master. He thoroughly understood the kind of thing the people love to see; yet in spite of his knowledge he staged a play, by far the greatest of all his works in intensity and vigor. Such a piece

would have ruined an ordinary man and would, under ordinary circumstances, have deprived the author of every possibility of ever receiving any honor which a nation can confer upon a writer. He knew, however, exactly what he was doing, and it is an everlasting testimonial to his honesty that he wrote "Ghosts." Honest preacher and teacher that he was, he felt, independent of his desire to defend his views, that society can only improve if the body of each man and woman, wherein dwells the spirit of God, becomes a sanctuary for the Divine Presence.

The Plot Unfolded.

He tells the story of a woman married to a gay man, a man who was full of what the French call *la joie de vivre,* "the love of life," the joy of living. This man is already dead before the opening of the first act. He has left behind a vast fortune and he also has left "to mourn him," his wife, and a son, Oswald, and a young woman, Regina, of whom he is the father, but who was born out of wedlock, the mother being a servant in his house. The secret of his evil life has been well kept, and Captain Alving has gone to his grave respected and esteemed, "wept, honored and sung." At the beginning of the play we are informed that his widow, in order that society shall regard her dead husband as a good and noble benefactor, is to have dedicated on the next day a magnificent orphanage, which is to be the means of carrying forward for all generations the name of one whom society believes to have been a wonderfully good

man. The money that she is to use for this purpose is a part of the fortune left to her, of course, by her husband; but she has reached that stage of life when his money has become tainted in her eyes. She wishes to get rid of it lest it pollute her son, and while the world believes that this noble and pious widow desires to honor her husband, she is, in fact, endeavoring to relieve herself and her son by giving back to society the money she does not even wish to touch.

She has long known the character of her husband. She heard him flirting with the servant in his own house. She understood exactly what he did. She herself helped the woman he had ruined to marry a carpenter, Engstrand, and gave her hush money or permitted her husband to do so. She even later on permitted this woman's child, Regina, to live in the Alving household as a maid. She knew very well how she had stayed home, day after day, and night after night, playing cards to keep her husband from going with vile associates. She herself knew that her own child had come into the world tainted by the character of his father, for as she once says to her son, Oswald, "I saw only this one thing: that your father was a broken-down man before you were born."

Pastor Manders Appears.

At the end of the first year after her marriage, life had become intolerable. She ran away from home and fled to her preacher, Pastor Manders, a very suave and rather common type of society preacher. He was a man

who, I should think,—I have never seen the play,—parts his hair down the middle, has light blue eyes, is rather good looking and is socially graceful and fit,—you know, the type so admired by frivolous women. I should imagine he has a very deep voice, which trembles with emotion. I imagine that he parts his silky beard in the center of his chin, something like this, (gesticulating). I am sure that he pays visits to every house in the congregation, if the people are rich. I am quite sure of that. I am perfectly certain that he never uttered a truth from the pulpit in his life. He may have uttered a mass of truisms, but never a truth. I imagine that he is the man who showed how the ignoble rich man could get into heaven and invented a way for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. I am equally sure he attended every pink tea, and dressed with due and precise regard for society's edicts. In a word, he reminds me of the Rev. Dr. ——. Why give his name? I only know, as I have pondered the character of Manders, that I thank God that he is not a picture of my ideal of a preacher and teacher.

The Beginning of the Lie.

Now, this Pastor once loved Helen Alving and she loved him, but her family said, I suppose, "What's the use of marrying a preacher? What's the good of a clergyman anyhow? We know that there are three sexes, men, women, and clergymen. He is not a good match; marry a man with money! Money covers a multitude of deficiencies. Yes, marry a rich man!" Thus family in-

fluence led Helen to marry Captain Alving, who was a chamberlain to the king. Pastor Manders was an orthodox preacher, hence, when Mrs. Alving flees to him, he says, "Return to your husband! Don't be foolish like Nora Helmer! Society will be terribly shocked, for you know that when Nora Helmer ran away from her husband everybody was amazed and scandalized." He induces her to go home and she obeys him.

But from that day her life becomes a lie. She lies to her husband's friends. She lies to her son. She lies to her pastor. She lies to society; and everybody approves the dear good, sweet woman who lies. The fact is that while her husband is drinking and carousing and indulging his wild fancies or telling his vile jokes, his wife is attending to his business, and his fortune is made by her, not by him. We read in the first act how Pastor Manders induces this woman to return to her home, scolding her into submission. "You have," he says, "been all your life under the dominion of a pestilent spirit of self-will. The whole bias of your mind has been towards insubordination and lawlessness. You have never known how to endure any bond. Everything that has weighed upon you in life you have cast away without care or conscience, like a burden you were free to throw off at will. It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and you left your husband."

Covering the Lie.

Yes, man-made social customs regard her as being bound by the holiest ties, even but though the man had

broken his contract. She has, as I said before, taken the illegitimate child of her husband into her own house and given her a mother's care, but she has never permitted the girl to know who she was. Furthermore, in order that her son Oswald should never come under the influence of his father, she sent him to be educated in Paris, for he already showed all the marks of artistic genius; but she never allowed Oswald to know anything of the real character of his father. Now, the day is at hand when the Orphan Asylum is to be dedicated and the name of Captain Alving is to be glorified in an address by Pastor Manders, by the preacher who rolls his r's and raises his eyes ecstatically to the kind of God he worships.

A Bit of Symbolism.

A discussion ensues between Mrs. Alving and the Pastor about the advisability of insuring the institution. Surely if any place is under the special care of God it is an orphan asylum! Why then insure it? And anyhow, many believe, superstitiously, that to insure such a building would indicate a lack of faith in God. Well, then, there is to be no insurance. Ibsen objected to the symbolism which critics constantly discovered in his writings; but, surely, here is as fine a symbolic utterance as was ever written! How many of us feel that it is unnecessary to insure our children against the tainting influences of their environments, because we believe that if there is any place in this world where children receive the best influence, it is at the side of the father and mother? Alas! many a young life is destroyed in temp-

lation's lurid fires, as was the Orphanage by the devastating flames.

The Truth Revealed.

With the appearance of Oswald the attitude of Manders becomes almost ferocious. His pulpit narrowness cannot tolerate the broad views of life acceptable to the young artist, any more than it sympathizes with Mrs. Alving's reading of the liberal classics. From the day she returned to her husband until after his death Manders had not visited her. He could, therefore, know nothing of her real life during those many years.

An acrimonious argument is carried on between the Pastor and the widow, during which Oswald makes his exit. Stung to the soul by the unjust reflections of Manders, who has formed his opinion of her by idle report as so many of us form our opinions of others, for the first time in these many years she speaks the truth from her heart. Of her husband and her life with him she says:

Mrs. Alving. I had borne a great deal in this house. To keep him at home in the evenings, and at night, I had to make myself his boon companion in his secret orgies up in his room. There I have had to sit alone with him, to clink glasses and drink with him, and to listen to his ribald, silly talk. I have had to fight with him to get him dragged to bed—

Manders. **(Moved).** And you were able to bear all this?

Mrs. Alving. I had to bear it for my little boy's sake. But when the last insult was added; when my own servant maid—; then I swore to myself: This shall

come to an end! And so I took the reins into my own hand—the whole control—over him and everything else. For now I had a weapon against him, you see; he dared not oppose me. It was then I sent Oswald away from home. He was nearly seven years old, and was beeginning to observe and ask questions, as children do. That I could not bear. It seemed to me the child must be poisoned by merely breathing the air of this polluted home. That was why I sent him away. And now you can see, too, why he was never allowed to set foot inside his home so long as his father lived. No one knows what that cost me.

Manders. You have indeed had a life of trial.

Mrs. Alving. I could never have borne it if I had not had my work. For I may truly say that I have worked! All the additions to the estate—all the improvements—all the labour-saving appliances, that Alving was so much praised for having introduced—do you suppose he had energy for anything of the sort?—he, who lay all day on the sofa, reading an old Court Guide! No; but I may tell you this, too; when he had his better intervals, it was I who urged him on; it was I who had to drag the whole load when he relapsed into his evil ways, or sank into querulous wretchedness.

Things Which Will Not Down.

But of all this the world knew nothing. Yea, it was to the honor of such a man that the wife was now to dedicate a perpetual memorial. The first act is about to close with Pastor Mander's eyes gazing upon a woman who is eating out her heart reflecting on the "what might have been," when the evidence of Oswald's attention to Regina is made painfully plain to his mother. She has seen ghosts; "the couple from the conservatory," Captain Alving and Regina's mother, have risen again!

For that is the meaning of "Ghosts," les revenants, "the things which rise again."

Ghosts.

Struggle as she will against the fate she has invoked upon herself, Mrs. Alving is too weak to assume the position Nora Helmer took in "A Doll's House." Ibsen must make her yield to circumstances since his critics look with disfavor upon the wife, who, even with abundant reason for her act, leaves her husband. But by her yielding she feels that she has only raised for herself a host of ghosts. Manders, to whom she tells this, fails to understand her, and she seeks to enlighten him thus:

Mrs. Alving. Let me tell you what I mean. I am timid and faint-hearted because of the ghosts that hang about me; and that I can never quite shake off.

Manders. What do you say hangs about you?

Mrs. Alving. Ghosts! When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was as though ghosts rose up before me. But I almost think we are all of us ghosts, Pastor Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our father and mother that "walks" in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas, and lifeless old beliefs, and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we cannot shake them off. Whenever I take up a newspaper, I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines. There must be ghosts all the country over, as thick as the sands of the sea. And then we are, one and all, so pitifully afraid of the light.

Manders. Aha—here we have the fruits of your reading. And pretty fruits they are, upon my word! Oh, those horrible, revolutionary, free-thinking books!

Mrs. Alving. You are mistaken, my dear Pastor. It was you yourself who set me thinking; and I thank you for it with all my heart.

Manders. I!

Mrs. Alving. Yes—when you forced me under the yoke of what you called duty and obligation; when you lauded as right and proper what my whole soul rebelled against as something loathsome. It was then that I began to look into the seams of your doctrines. I wanted only to pick at a single knot; but when I had got that undone, the whole thing ravelled out. And then I understood that it was all machine-sewn.

The gloom thickens, the mists fail to rise, the foul effluvia of polluted deeds assail us. We are to see the pitiless operation of the unfailing natural law which prevails in the world of moral life as in the material universe. Oswald is the son of his profligate father and of his morally weak mother. While in Paris the gilded fruit on the tree of life was not regarded by him as forbidden. He finds himself exhausted and easily fatigued. He suffers with headaches, and he consults a physician, who tells him that his disease has been inherited from his father. This the son refuses to believe, since he only knew his father as a good man. Alas! the lie bears consequences. When he is seized with an attack after the burning of the Orphanage, he bares his soul to his afflicted mother. He repeats his experience with the doctor in Paris.

Oswald. At last he said: "There has been something worm-eaten in you from your birth." He used that very word—**vermoulu.**

Mrs. Alving. **(Breathlessly).** What did he mean by that?

Oswald. I didn't understand either, and begged him to explain himself more clearly. And then the old cynic said—**(Clenching his fist)** Oh—!

Mrs. Alving. What did he say?

Oswald. He said, "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."

Mrs. Alving. **(Rising slowly).** The sins of the fathers—!

Oswald. I very nearly struck him in the face—

Mrs. Alving. **(Walks away across the room).** The sins of the fathers—

Oswald. **(Smiles sadly).** Yes; what do you think of that?

The Hell Created by Consequences.

What does she think? In her mad desire to save and to spare her boy she will do anything, she will give him anything. The boy's sensuous and lustful imagination has led him to believe that Regina can save him if he may take her to wife and live with her alone. But, accumulation of terrible consequences, the girl is, though he knows it not, his own half-sister. In truth, nothing more terrifying has ever been written for the stage than the mother and these two children of her degenerate husband sitting together in the room sipping champagne. They are the sombre incarnation of the Fates.

The end is approaching. Oswald has been warned of the consequences of his sickness and has provided himself with the means of ridding himself of "the disease he has as his birthright." Once his mind is affected he will poison himself, but he would take Regina as his companion because he knows that she lacks that human sym-

pathy which would enable her to endure his long sufferings, and she would, therefore, the more readily give him the poison with which speedily to end them.

The Bitter End of the Lie.

But Regina refuses to make any kind of sacrifice. "If Oswald takes after his father, I take after my mother, I dare say," is her unshakable reply. The inheritor of the diseased will of a weak mother and of the *joie de vie* of a profligate father, the poor girl leaves the home and goes to her fate. And Oswald? Another attack seizes him. The poor mother is distracted. He insists that his mother give him the poison by which he can terminate his sufferings.

The sky clears. The mists rise. The sun shines. The lad's mind breaks and he cries for the sun. Though the signs promise clearing weather, there can be no change in the unalterable law, "the sins of the parents are visited upon the children." Oswald would have the sun, as his grief-stricken and horrified mother gazes in terror on the human wreck before her. Indeed, naught but the sun of truth can clarify the shameful situation produced by the atmosphere of lies in which society forces so many of us to live.

The Horrors Must Not Shock Us.

There appear some passages in this play which you and I would not have written, which we do not like to read black upon white, and which we resent when we

hear them at the theatre. But since we are studying Ibsen we shall not allow ourselves to be called off from our pursuit of the truths he discloses, because the odor of the sewer assails our nostrils or the mud of the gutter bespatters us. If a man were quite sure that he could stop the present war in Europe by crossing the continent from the coast of France to the interior of Russia, ought he permit himself to be deterred from so doing because he might see corpses, and human limbs, and groaning soldiers, and pools of blood, on the battlefields? Surely he would be an arrant coward who would be stopped by distasteful sights and harrowing scenes! If we are to learn the lessons which Ibsen teaches, we must not permit our course to be interrupted because some parts of his works are distasteful to us, and cannot be discussed at pink teas and anti-suffrage meetings!

Beware of Ghosts!

Ibsen warned us: Beware of ghosts! Not, forsooth, the ghosts of which we read in the stories popular in our childhood; but ghosts, the consequences of our own lives, the results of our own deeds. Remember, men and women, that God has nowhere asked us to do what is wrong, but has everywhere urged us to do what is right! Now, if we expect that, having done what is right, we should reap the reward of the seeds we have sown, then by the same logic, having done what is wrong, we must expect that the wrong-doing must come back to us. Every language has some proverb which teaches us this truth, and which may be summed up in some such

phrases, "The gods are just and of our pleasant vices make whips wherewith to scourge us;" or "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine."

The Indelible Results.

Ibsen desired to bring home to the conscience of all who see or read this play the great truth that no man can escape the unalterable consequences of his own deeds. Every word we utter is spoken forever. Apologize for it all we will, we cannot call it back; once forged, it is forged forever. Like the spoken word, so the written word, the act, the deed,—once done it is performed forever. Though the world knows not what we do, *we know.* We may confuse the issue as much as we care; yet before the bar of our own conscience, the act remains; it stays, *and it stays forever.*

The Newer Knowledge.

Time was when, perhaps, it was not so clearly understood that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; when men did not realize that visits to "the red-light districts" brought consequences that are so very far-reaching. Time was when young men would laugh at the results of their youthful escapades. Time was when men did not know that certain germs withstand every kind of treatment, and that fire alone will destroy them. Time was when men did not know that certain of these germs penetrate into the blood channel, and enter, as I have myself seen, men's hearts and even attack their brains. Once men jokingly spoke of such

diseases as revelations of their "early piety;" but now we call it their early filth, their early lack of personal control, their early want of self-respect, their early moral deficiency and bestial tendency. We have been pleading through the ages for the monogamic marriage. Why, we have never yet given monogamy a chance! We have permitted, side by side with the practice of monogamy, which we say is the law of God, the red-light districts! Now we know the awful consequences that ensue.

Young man, young woman,—I speak to you not as a preacher, but as a father, when I say to you that if you have a vigorous body and possess virile health, if you are, physically speaking, pieces of stuff clean and vigorous out of which a fine manhood and womanhood can blossom, go down on your knees and thank God for the father who created you and the mother who bore you! Men who have behind them a virile and moral parenthood will reverently remember their father and their mother and their days will, normally, be long in the land which God gave to them. For them there are no ghosts.

Some Modern Ghosts.

Ghosts! I have seen them as, perhaps, you have not. I remember being at a funeral on one occasion when the son of the dead man stood over his father's coffin and, before I realized it, had spat into the face of his dead father. That shocks you, does it not? It was a horrible, a vile act. In justification he shouted at his father, "I am a wreck and you made me so." Ghosts! I know a

young man who, face to face with the moral delinquency of his father, marched up and down the room, the tears streaming down his cheeks as he sobbed, "God, I would give all I am ever likely to possess if my name were not ——!" Ghosts! I know children whom God has cursed with the kind of mothers they have. I do not preach dishonor of mothers. I preach honor both for father and mother. But, men and women, *en nihilo nihil fit,* "nothing comes of nothing." If we do no noble things for our children, how can we expect our children to honor us?

Ghosts! Why, they pursue us everywhere. We see them in the very ideas which have been planted in us by the fatuous advice often given to children. A man tells his son, "Make a fortune anyhow; make it honestly if you can, but under any and all circumstances, make a fortune!" Do you expect that that lad will grow up with fine moral discrimination? Do you think that the girl whose mother teaches her to dress well, to use the powder puff and paint box, to dance well, because "that is the best way to catch the men," do you think that girl in later life will really respect her mother? Externally, perhaps! But, men and women, you do not know what young folks tell me, (and I shall never betray their confidences), but many a girl wants to get away from her parents' home, and is willing to marry anybody, if she can only establish a house for herself when these ghosts begin to pursue her.

"The sins of the fathers are visited upon the chil-

dren!'' I have in mind a man whom I have always regarded as a friend, whom I have known during the greater part of my public ministry. A few years ago he appeared to be a kindly, sympathetic man. I thought that his heart beat in tune with generous things. I have had reasons to consider him recently, and I was not quite sure whether I was looking at the man or his ghost. He is so dried up and shrivelled that his hand seems palsied when it attempts to reach his pocket. I really pity him, —this ghost of a former kindly self! He is a father of children; how think you, his children will some day act toward their father who sins against every canon of a high manhood?

I knew a young woman once who was full of promise, a delightful personality, devoted to God and religion, and accustomed to spend her time in the study of things holy. She got into the *fast* set, the so-called four hundred,—the four hundred who are not the *real* set, but the spurious article; the people who have made money too rapidly and who do the things that outrage public opinion; the people who include among their number the refined (?) blackguards of the community who are not particular whom they call mine and thine when it comes to husbands and wives. They include the women who outrage the fine susceptibilities of men, and concerning one of these a Southern man once said, ''Thank God, she is not my mother.''

This friend got in with that set. Now she smokes cigarettes in the most accomplished and most artistic

manner. It is difficult to differentiate between her and the members of a still faster set of whom we are not supposed to speak in polite society. Do not think me a prude, but there are some things which I do not like to see any woman do. I hate to witness the departure of the fine, noble ways of our mothers. I know that our mothers were old-fashioned; but some day we shall be old-fashioned, and I would love to think that the children, when they grow up and their mothers are gone, should not think of them as cigarette-smokers, as huggers of men who are not their husbands; but rather as noble personalities who took husband and child by the hand and led them to the things that are fine and helpful and beautiful. Ghosts! what horrible things that young woman is laying up to come back to her some day!

Ghosts! A lady said to me on one occasion, "I cannot understand why it is that my boy won't sit still at the table." I said to her, "You ought to have a moving picture taken of yourself; you would then understand it quite easily." A mother once said to me, "I don't know where my boy learned to tell such lies." I asked her if she kept a record of all she herself says. Do not imagine that all the sins are on the father's side. There are quite a few that come from the mother's side.

Ibsen a Teacher of Morals.

Ibsen is a teacher above all things. He wants us to learn that the sins, of which we are conscious, or of which we are unconscious, of the parents are visited

upon the children. For every child that has disobeyed its parents, there are a hundred parents that have disobeyed God. For every child that has broken the heart of its mother or father, there have been a hundred fathers and mothers who have blasted the life of their child. For every child that has done wrong, there have been a hundred parents to show it the way. There is nothing lost in the realms of physical nature, neither is there anything lost in the realms of moral nature. Some day we shall realize that the way we walk is the way our children walk. Some day we shall realize that the ideals we cherish are the ideals we plant in the garden of our children's imagination. Some day we shall see the father's face in the child's face. Some day we shall see in the child's nature the revelation of the mother's nature.

Some day we shall see that the stripes on our own bodies reappear as stripes on our child's body. We see it so distinctly in the case of our horses, our dogs, our cows. We know that the child is the product of its parents, but blindly we refuse to see our own selves and characters in the acts of our children. But, by the same law of God by which the animal reproduces its kind with the characteristics of the body, the blood and temperament of its ancestors, so each of us has behind us the ancestry which so greatly determines us, and our progeny after us. While, thank God, it is true that environment can, to some degree, modify hereditary tendencies, let every young man and woman beware; let every father and

mother who can still determine the future, beware, lest these ghosts come back into our lives.

Sin and Its Punishment.

It is the privilege of every child to honor the father and the mother, but it is no less the privilege of every parent to honor the son and the daughter. God's law is perfect. Our own deeds are our own Nemesis. To the Hebrew genius there is only one word for sin and punishment, the word *'Awon,* translated in the Bible "Iniquity." Iniquity means not only the sin itself, but also the punishment for sin. Let us heed this wise suggestion. Know, then, that when we offend the natural law, which is moral as well as physical in its implication, we are but planning for the return of ghosts in the lives of those we love, and whom we would, if we could, shield from every harm.

HENRIK IBSEN

VI. An Enemy of the People*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah xv.

Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! (Jeremiah xv., 10).

After the delivery of last Sunday's address I imagined that quite a few of those who honored me by listening to me would take exception to some of my conclusions. I anticipated that many a protest would be raised and, from what I have heard during the week, I was apparently not wrong in assuming that the attitude taken toward the discourse by a certain class of people who attend these services on Sunday, would be adverse to the theme and the deductions made therefrom.

Objections to "Ghosts."

I expected the same old commentary to which I have been accustomed during the greater part of the thirty years of my ministry, namely, that some people did not *like* the lecture. I felt sure that some others would say

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

that it was not a *nice* lecture. I was certain that there would be many who would say that it was not the kind of topic to be discussed before the mixed audience of men, women and children who gather at Rodef Shalom. I was convinced that there would be many who would take grave exception to the consideration of the oft-taught but rarely recognized truth, "the sins of the fathers are visited upon their children;" and from what was reported to me during the week, I gather that some very heated discussions took place in certain homes, where I was not, of course, present, and where those who disagreed with me were not over-gentle in the manner of expressing their disapproval. For all of which, men and women, I am fully grateful.

Thoughtful Criticism Is Always Desirable.

Rather the bitterest possible criticism than that you go away from here, week after week, sit down to eat a heavy Sunday meal, then play, as is all too frequently the case, a game of poker, and never discuss what has been said here. It is not true that such is the habit of every man in this congregation; but it is true of so many that I dare refer to it. So, too, I prefer almost anything to that rather silly expression of disapproval which ends in inaction, and which would let the world go hang for all it cares, rather than appear to tolerate any effort to help the coming generation.

If I, who am only a humble teacher, practically without influence, practically without power,—because I am

paid for what I teach,—placed practically in a position in which every truth uttered may be made to "waste its perfume on the desert air," am made to feel that my presentation of Ibsen's theme raised a storm; how, in the presence of the cyclone of disapproval which "Ghosts" raised, must Ibsen have felt, seeing that he was a really great writer, a man of tremendous force, a rarely gifted author, who might rightly have regarded himself as a modern Jeremiah, and who might justly have cried all through his life, "Woe is me my mother that thou hast borne me, a man of strife and contention?"

It is comparatively easy for the average man to sit down and do and say nothing. It is very simple for one to move on with the tide of public opinion. It is not difficult for a man to be a smiling and approving shadow. It requires no genius for men when they speak to give forth only an echo of the opinion of others. But when a man is a Jeremiah, he cannot help speaking out of his heart the truth which God has inscribed upon it. To take the path of least resistance may be the method of blind and unconscious nature; it should not be the characteristic of human nature.

Dead and Living Fish.

The Japanese people have a festival each month in the year, the holiday being observed on that day in the month which corresponds to the number of the month. Thus, in the first month, the festival is held on the first day of the month; in the second month on the second

day; in the third month on the third day. In the fourth month on the fourth day they observe a girls' festival, and on the fifth day of the fifth month they hold a boys' festival. On this occasion the Japanese mother flies, from a pole extended from the window of her house, fish made out of paper and colored to the life. As the air enters the paper carp's mouth it spreads like a little balloon and looks like a live fish. I once asked a Japanese mother at Miyanoshita to explain to me this curious custom. She said, "Every year, when this festival is observed, the mother of the household gathers her sons around her and says to her boys, 'You must learn to be a fish when you grow up.' The children, wondering, ask their mother what she means, and she tells them, 'Dead fish float with the stream; but live fish move against the stream, and swim up against it, too.' "

Struggling Against the Stream.

It is very easy, men and women, to be dead fish and float down the stream of public opinion. It, however, takes a real man to be a live fish and strive against the popular point of view or denounce popular opinion when it is wrong. It takes a real man to teach that truth which people hate and to make them hate the lie which they love. It took an Ibsen to write "Ghosts," and it took an Ibsen to answer his critics and opponents, and to reveal to the people his conception of the real purpose of his life after "Ghosts" had been denounced and attacked. This he did through the very interesting and simple play we are to discuss this morning.

Ibsen's Reply to His Critics.

I told you last week, when announcing today's theme, that "An Enemy of the People" is my favorite among Ibsen's plays, though not from the standpoint of its symbolism or poetry, for to a great degree it lacks those elements which make "A Doll's House" and "Pillars of Society" and "Ghosts" so attractive to thoughtful people. From beginning to end the play flows on a very simple plane and is shorn of all those graces of diction, important problems, and profundity of thought which characterize so many of the plays of the great Norwegian. Attacked, pilloried, denounced, he writhed beneath the lash of absurd and hypocritical criticism, and he flung back in self-defence, into the teeth of an unbelieving world, as choice a play as has ever been written by a modern dramatist.

"An Enemy of the People" is a short but attractive play. It tells the story of a doctor who is in some respects unlike Ibsen, so designed lest the people should say that the central character was Ibsen himself. He takes as his hero a doctor who is not a man of strife and contention, but a simple, unworldly man, who is inclined to love everybody and everything, but especially his high sense of what is right, his fine conception of his duty to the community which employs him. Dr. Thomas Stockmann, who is the brother of the Burgomaster of a little town on the south coast of Norway, is the hero and is, in many respects a pen picture of Ibsen himself. After the play was written, Ibsen wrote to a friend, "I have enjoyed

writing this piece, and I feel quite lost and lonely now that it is out of hand. Dr. Stockmann and I got on excellently together; we agreed on so many subjects. But the Doctor is a more muddle-headed person than I am, and he has, moreover, several other characteristics because of which people will stand hearing a good many things from him which they might not perhaps have taken in such very good part had they been said by me."

The Opening of the Play.

Dr. Thomas Stockmann has been brought to the city, of which his brother is the Burgomaster, as the director of the Baths, which have become widely known for their curative qualities, and which have also become a source of large revenue to the city. But the good Doctor has become disturbed by discovering that the waters have become polluted,—a fact which threatens to end the usefulness of the Baths unless heroic measures are taken to remove the polluting causes. He says nothing to anyone until his fears are confirmed by the chemical analysis which has been conducted at his request by the leading expert of the land.

As soon as we are introduced to the Burgomaster we feel the air filled with suppressed excitement. The two men are opposite and opposing types. The official is one of those men who believe in letting well alone. The Doctor is so constituted that he can never be satisfied with half-truths. The Burgomaster is the embodiment of the time-serving politician; the Doctor is the incarnation

of honor and honesty. The city magistrate represents the reactionary or "compact majority;" the Doctor represents the minority, the man, who, as Ibsen wrote in a letter to George Brandes, "is in the right because he is most closely in league with the future."

Doctor Stockmann and His Friends.

The Doctor takes a few friends into his confidence, relying on the support they will give to his effort to save the town and its profitable venture, by removing the source of the pollution which renders the waters unfit to drink and perilous to the health of all who bathe in them. Hovstad, the editor of the daily paper, and Aslasken its printer, as well as Billing, who is on the paper's staff, all agree to support him, feeling assured that the public will more than willingly rally to the side of one whose efforts are transparently honest and unselfish.

The Doctor vs. the Burgomaster.

The Doctor is convinced that it is his duty to publish the facts, since nothing is to be gained by either disguising or suppressing them. He feels that one stranger injured by the Baths will do more harm to the city than the open confession that a source of pollution has been discovered and is in course of being removed and remedied. Nothing is better than the truth, is the Doctor's dictum.

Not so the Burgomaster. He believes that the people must be deluded. Representing the "compact majority"

he, nevertheless, feels that it cannot be trusted. He knows that the expense of remedying the evil will fall upon the shoulders of the stockholders, who will blame the officials, whose foolhardy and stupid inability is responsible for the mistake. He feels that he must, therefore, make it appear that to publish the truth will, as so many others have said of so many other cities and conditions, "harm the fair name of our city," and that the expense will fall upon the town.

Telling the Truth.

But the Doctor is fearless and utterly unconcerned with any consequences save that the truth must be told at all costs, that the people are entitled to be dealt with fairly and honestly. What are dollars and cents compared with the danger to the town itself and to its economic future, now jeopardized by the poisonous waters? But it is not such an easy matter to share the truth with the public. To the innocent and honest Doctor nothing is simpler than to tell the whole truth, to set about improvement, and to introduce a healthy for an unhealthy state. But to the Burgomaster to tell the truth is a complex matter. He seems to understand the majority better than does his brave brother. He knows how often even one's best friends get irritated, how even the most upright citizens become resentful, and how the congregation often wriggles in its seat and manifest signs of disapproval, when one tells the simple truth.

We would imagine that, if one came into our home and told us with authority that the water in the bath-

tub would poison our dear children, we would be overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude to our generous informant. Not so easily, however, are people pleased when such information touches the pocket-book. Certainly Stockmann was not. The "compact majority" is not opposed to improvements and reforms. Its representative, Aslasken, tells us so; for he "would also favor self-government by the people if only it doesn't cost the ratepayers too much." But the majority loves to have its own way. Like a mustang, it seizes the reins in its mouth and delights to run away with them. It wants no suggestions. Like Israel of old, it says, "Leave us alone; we will have our own way!"

The Power of the Press.

The representatives of the press are prepared to carry on a campaign of publicity, and when Aslasken counsels moderation they refuse to listen. They will bring to the ground a society which flourishes on a lie. They will overthrow a government which is established on policies opposed to the best interests of the people. But their vainglorious boasting is soon to be put to the test. Petra, the lovable and most attractive daughter of the Doctor, is doing into Norwegian a certain English novel with whose underlying idea she has no sympathy. She comes to Hovstad to tell him that she cannot compromise her idea of divine justice by continuing the translation of a book which preaches such outrageous doctrines. The editor endeavors to defend the policy of his paper, but only succeeds in proving to the beautiful and

fearless Petra that his interest in her father is only a phase of his interest in her. Petra is shocked at the editor's cowardice, and more than ever attached to her chivalrous and brave father.

The Unstable Public.

The way of the reformer is not amid a bower of roses which have no thorns. The Burgomaster is soon to prove this to his brother, for he calls on Hovstad and proves to his satisfaction that the burden of improvements in the Baths must fall upon the tax-payers, a most oppressive task for so small a community, especially when the evil can be cured by some chemical which can be thrown into the water. The consequence is that the Press will publish not the Doctor's letter but the Burgomaster's report as dictated by the Board of Control of the Baths. Ah, says the official, it is one thing to make public improvements; it is an entirely different thing to carry on these improvements at the public's expense. When the public have to pay, the friend is often regarded as the foe.

Experience Supports Ibsen.

The situation is not new nor strange. How often have we heard, even in so enlightened a community as Pittsburgh, those who most earnestly desire to make this city a fit place for our children to grow in, those who have most unselfishly laid bare the corruption and filth of the city, denominated the enemy of the city, because they were accused of publishing the shame of the town

to the stranger without our gates! And do you think, men and women, do you believe, you hard-headed, common-sense business men of Pittsburgh, that if we, ostrich-like, hide our heads and refuse to see the evils in our city, the people outside of Pittsburgh did not have their eyes set upon us and did not know what was going on inside our gates? Alas! the reward offered to the truest friends a city has is that they are misrepresented by being called the enemies of those they might and could most help!

The Attack on the Friend.

But to continue. The Doctor cannot be shaken from his purpose. Returning to the newspaper office to read a proof of his report, he becomes conscious of a change which has come over his former friends. Observing the cap and cane of the Burgomaster, who is in hiding, he understands the cause of the new opposition. A little comedy is here introduced when the Doctor puts on the cap of the Burgomaster and seizes the cane of office, and, for the moment, this relieves the tension. But only for a moment. The official threatens his brother with dismissal. He forbids the publication of the truth-spreading report. He even refuses his brother a hearing.

Blocked at every point the Doctor determines to take the public into his confidence. He will address a meeting of the people; but he reckons without his host. Every hall in the city is closed against him. He finds, however, that a friend, Horster, a ship's captain, has a

home in which there is a room large enough in which to hold a meeting, and there it is that the famous Fourth Act of the play, a most stirring satirical attack upon the conduct of the reactionaries, is enacted.

The Famous Fourth Act.

Even at the last moment the Doctor believes that all he has to do is to make his address and have the people proclaim him friend and savior. But he has not understood the way of the "compact majority." It resorts to parliamentary law when it cannot carry its cause by its inherent truth and justice. A chairman must first be elected, and, of course, the cut-and-dried policy of the Burgomaster has seen to it that Aslasken, the representative of the majority, is to preside. A vote is then taken forbidding anyone to refer to the public Baths. But Doctor Stockmann's turn is to come. The Baths are, of course, very important; but they are the merest trifle in comparison with a new discovery he has made within the past few days,—"the discovery that all our sources of spiritual life are poisoned, and that our whole society rests upon a pestilential basis of falsehood."

The Attack on the Majority.

Then comes the attack upon the enemies of society who parade as its friends. Asked to name them, the Doctor says:

"Yes, you may be sure I shall name them! For this is the great discovery I made yesterday: (In a louder tone) The most dangerous foe to truth and freedom in our midst is the compact

majority. Yes, it's the confounded, compact, liberal majority—that, and nothing else! There, I've told you. . . . The majority never has right on its side. Never, I say! That is one of the social lies that a free thinking man is bound to rebel against. Who make up the majority in any given country? Is it the wise men or the fools? I think we must agree that the fools are in a terrible, overwhelming majority, all the wide world over. But how in the devil's name can it ever be right for the fools to rule over the wise men? (Uproar and yells). Yes, yes, you can shout me down, but you cannot gainsay me. The majority has might—unhappily—but right it has not. It is I, and the few, the individuals, that are in the right. The minority is always right."

Only the Individual Counts.

Such opinions are indeed revolutionary, but the friend of the people is not scared by names. Denounced by the editor as a revolutionist, he replies:

"Yes, by Heaven, I am, Mr. Hovstad! I am going to revolt against the lie that truth belongs exclusively to the majority. What sort of truths do the majority rally round? Truths so stricken in years that they are sinking into decrepitude. When a truth is so old as that, gentlemen, it's in a fair way to become a lie."

Threatened with a closure and ordered to take his seat, he charges the audience anew and hurls at them the statement that he will proclaim the truth everywhere, only to learn that he who is the community's real friend is denounced as its enemy. But the text at this point is so interesting that we shall hear the author's own words:

Hovstad. It almost seems as if the Doctor's object were to ruin the town.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, so well do I love my native town that I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie.

Aslaksen. That's plain speaking.

(Noise and whistling. Mrs. Stockmann coughs in vain; the Doctor no longer heeds her).

Hovstad. (Shouting amid the tumult). The man who would ruin a whole community must be an enemy to his fellow citizens!

Dr. Stockmann. (With growing excitement). What does it matter if a lying community is ruined! Let it be levelled to the ground, say I! All men who live upon a lie ought to be exterminated like vermin! You'll end by poisoning the whole country; you'll bring it to such a pass that the whole country will deserve to perish. And if ever it comes to that, I shall say from the bottom of my heart: Perish the country! Perish all its people!

A Man. (In the crowd). Why, he talks like a regular enemy of the people.

Billing. Strike me dead, but there spoke the people's voice.

The Whole Assembly. (Shouting). Yes! yes! yes! He's an enemy of the people! He hates his country! He hates the whole people!

His condemnation is complete. As the meeting comes to a close the chairman says,

"With the exception of one intoxicated person, this meeting of the citizens unanimously declares the medical officer of the Baths, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, to be an enemy of the people. (Cheers and applause). Three cheers for our fine old municipality! (Cheers). Three cheers for our able and energetic Burgomaster, who has so loyally set family prejudice aside! (Cheers). The meeting is dissolved."

The Terrible Cost.

The fight has been a bitter and a costly one for the public-spirited, conscientious and fearless Doctor. The friend of the people has been made to appear as its enemy. His house is attacked, the windows are broken, his daughter Petra is dismissed from her position, his children are attacked in school, he is dismissed from his Directorship of the Baths, and his landlord serves him notice to quit. Yet he will not surrender to his brother. Only for one moment does he hesitate,—when Morten Kiil, the adoptive-father of Mrs. Stockmann, points out that all he owns is invested in the Baths. Perhaps, the Doctor thinks, but only for an instant, an antidote may be found. But the next moment he renounces the thought.

The Doctor's Future Course.

Now what is left to him? Shall he emigrate and proceed to the new world, where Truth and Freedom may be found? Even this is now impossible, for Horster, who is ready to help him, has been deprived of his ship. He must remain and will accept Horster's hospitable home for himself and family, and therein he will open a school in which he will train the younger generation in the ideals of citizenship by which they ought to be actuated. He will show them that "the Liberals are the craftiest foes that free men have to face . . . that party programmes wring the necks of all young and living truths . . . that considerations of expediency turn justice

and morality upside down." And he will especially teach them to be independent, for "the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." Thus ends the play and all who read, and think, or who see it, learn the one great lesson which Ibsen intended to convey by his superb piece of writing: the unthinking mass treats as enemies those who are, in fact, their best friends.

Only the Individual Counts.

By this time it must have become clear to all of us that Ibsen was an individualist of the most radical type. Despising the State as he knew it, he believed that nothing counted except the individual for the production of whom the State was, from time to time, in labor. The individual, the minority, was, as he saw it, always in the right; the majority was always in the wrong, and with this partial truth he defended his own position. He was like that man who, when asked what orthodoxy meant, replied "My oxy." He believed that he had climbed higher up on the pyramid of progress, and that, therefore, he could see more than could the "compact majority." When Clemens Peterson, one of the greatest of the contemporary critics, adversely reviewed "Peer Gynt," and sneeringly remarked that it was not poetry at all, Ibsen retorted, "My book *is* poetry: and if it is not, then it will be. The conception of poetry in our country, in Norway, shall be made to conform to the book." No majority opinion could overwhelm him. Like Stockmann, he was strong enough to stand alone.

False Friends and Friendly Foes.

We have often felt, as we have traversed the path hewn for us by Ibsen, that originality, individuality, personality, is the choicest of God's gifts to man. But man is a social animal and the individual must operate through the State if he is to achieve aught of lasting good for mankind. The radical individualist plays, however, no mean part in the drama of progress, especially if he is great enough to reveal a higher aspect of truth, or unfold before mankind's gaze a new road to the promised land of freedom. Ibsen despises the dead fish which float with the stream; he adores the man who is like the vigorous fish which doggedly pushes its way up stream fighting the force of the opposing body of water. How true is it that when it is unprofitable to be just the reformer finds "the compact majority" opposed to him? How often do we find that the popular view, the majority opinion, is as contrary to good judgment as it is antagonistic to good principles! In his "Pillars of Society" Ibsen presents Bernick for consideration and shows how the majority regards this "whited sepulchre" as *a friend of the people.* In the play we are discussing he holds Dr. Stockmann before our admiring gaze and he proves that "the compact majority" has neither discernment nor appreciation, for it condemns its faithful friend and servant as *an enemy of the people.*

Slaves to Majorities.

Poor human nature! It wavers and trembles and falls in the presence of a new idea, fearing ridicule more

than any form of punishment, not excluding the most barbarous torture. Trained by a long and sad experience to bow to the will of the majority, our cowardice has been abetted by the authority of the church as well as by the brute force of the mass. Every means which the party in power could invoke, righteously or tyrannically, it has employed in the effort to denounce, weaken and overthrow the thinking minority, and agents have never been found wanting who would descend to make even an unholy use of the Holy work. Truly devils have "cited Scripture to suit their purposes."

The Things That Are Caesar's.

To enthrone conformity and to dethrone individuality, to justify the majority and to impeach the minority, no Scripture phrase has ever been more contorted and distorted than the well-known reply given by Jesus of Nazareth to the Pharisees who asked if it were lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not. The opponents of the Nazarene desires "'to catch him in his words" and to show that he was an enemy of the people, of whom Caesar, or the government, was the representative, though no truer friend of mankind has ever lived than the young Jew of Nazareth. He asks his contemptible foes for a penny and, receiving one, he put the question, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They replied, "Caesar's." Then he answers, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

For these many centuries these words have been taken to represent the attitude of all so-called respectable (?) people. They have been interpreted to mean a complete subservience to the majority, and an utter suppression of the minority. Most of us have been reared in slavery and find little joy in the power of an emancipating idea. Masters in the despicable republic of mediocrity we look with horror on the Tolstoys and Ibsens, and follow majority opinion even to the destruction of all personality and individuality.

The Demand of the Slave-Owner.

We give to Caesar what Caesar demands, but we fail to realize the vital principle involved in the phrase under cover of which we conceal or crush human personality. In reality this phrase, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," is the utterance under whose protection the slave-driver and negro-owner sheltered himself and supported his iniquitous system. I am far from attributing to the noble Nazarene this horrid motive; but to such base uses has his utterance been put, nevertheless. Thus this phrase has become the cogent reply given to the world by the party entrenched in power, by the friends of kings and priests. It is the answer made by those who have ever wished to destroy the influence of the enlightened few, the noble company of martyrs who have been the light of the world and without whom the salt even would have lost its flavor.

Misinterpretation of Scripture.

It is not difficult to understand why this phrase has been so often misunderstood and misinterpreted. Let us consider the second half of the sentence first! "Render to God the things that are God's!" How can any man render to God the things that are God's? Do we not know that everything in the universe is God's? The Psalmist speaks more correctly, in that he says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;" and Isaiah has a higher appreciation of God's universal ownership when he says, "Before Him the nations are as a drop of a bucket, yea, they are before Him as nothing, as less than nothing." It seems to me to be a somewhat restricted conception of God to ask man to render to Him the things which are His, when man and all he has belong to Him.

When Caesar Is Just.

But what of the earlier half of the phrase, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's?" Is it always our duty to render to Caesar the things Caesar says are his? Yes, when Caesar is just, but not when Caesar is unjust. Caesar may assume the right to enforce on us anything he sees fit, whether it is just or unjust; but there comes a time when it ceases to be a virtue to submit to Caesar's demands. The will of the majority may be wrong, and it is no virtue submissively to yield to it without a protest. On the contrary, it becomes the urgent duty of all good citizens to resist Caesar when we

are conscientiously convinced that he is wrong, the resistance being the expression of our desire to benefit the people by a wider liberty and a higher truth than may be possible of enjoyment under the malign rule of an unjust Caesar.

Death for Conscience' Sake.

So convinced am I that the minority should not sit in supine subjection to an impious majority that I regard it as an imperative duty to offer every form of resistance within the law and in the manner prescribed by law; and if we love our country, when Caesar is wrong, even to defy Caesar and to resist him, though the resistance may mean our death. And this leads me to say to the minority struggling against an impious and unjust Caesar, that most of us have not sufficiently discounted the facts that we must die some day, and that we cannot escape pain and suffering. My sympathy with the strugglers in Europe does not arise out of the physical suffering or the death which is stalking everywhere. All of us must die and all of us must suffer some form of pain and anguish before we die. I, of course, sympathize with the unfortunates, but it is more with their ideals and ideas that I sympathize than with the physical and material conditions which are, in some form or other, a part and parcel of human experience.

Now, to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, under any and all circumstances, is for the minority to write itself down a slave to the majority;

and if at this season throughout this country of ours a hundred million free people rise up and thank God for having, in His providence, sent to this nation its immortal first President, George Washington, it is largely because Washington led a party which replied to the unjust demands of a Caesar across the seas, "Taxation without representation is tyranny. We will serve Caesar when he is just, but never when he is unjust."

Majorities and Minorities.

The worst tyrant revealed to us on the pages of history has invariably been the majority. In all ages and lands the majority has exercised a power at the side of which individuals have been as a dwarf alongside a Goliath. The majority has *almost* always been wrong. I am almost tempted to say with Ibsen that the majority has *always* been wrong, while the minority has always been right. Certainly our experience, our reading, our study, has borne in upon our consciousness the fact that, if we were to remove from history's tomes a few names, humanity would be a lacertian brood moving in the slime and filth of primeval ignorance. One name, Abraham; one name, Moses; one name, Isaiah; one name, Jeremiah; one name, Amos; one name, Hosea; one name, Micah; take away these few names from a thousand years of the history of Israel and that historic people would long since have been lost in the mists of obscurity and blotted out amid the clouds of oblivion.

The Service of the Minority.

Take away from Greece one name, Socrates; one name, Plato; one name, Aristotle; one name, Phidias; one name; Praxiteles; and philosophy and art would yet be represented by tattooed Indians or the horrible exaggerations and superstitious lore of the Aztecs. Take away from the middle ages one name, Giordano Bruno; one name, Girolamo Savonarola; one name, Galileo; take away one name from Germany, Martin Luther; take away from the England of the seventeenth century one name, Oliver Cromwell; take away one name from the Colonies, Patrick Henry, who cried, as did all these men, "Give me liberty or give me death!"; take away this handful of names, and the remaining mass would be as a huge lump of dough without the slightest resiliency in it.

I am convinced that, but for the few, the many would have been useless; as I am convinced that only when the minority can impress its views upon the majority, does mankind move forward, and that when that minority is merged into the majority, out of that majority must again arise some minority which, as a party of protest, must set itself in the van and lead on to victory the slow-moving and massive majority. Ibsen understood this fully when he wrote as follows to George Brandes:

"You are, of course, right in urging that we must all work for the spread of our opinions. But I maintain that a fighter at the intellectual outposts can never gather a majority around him. In

ten years, perhaps, the majority may occupy the standpoint which Dr. Stockmann held at the public meeting. But during these ten years the Doctor will not have been standing still; he will be at least ten years ahead of the majority. The majority, the mass, the multitude, can never overtake him; he can never have the majority with him. As for myself, at all events, I am conscious of this incessant progression. At the point where I stood when I wrote each of my books, there now stands a fairly compact multitude; but I myself am there no longer; I am elsewhere, and, I hope, further ahead.''

The Trick of the Hired Liar.

This is the story of human progress, and the way almost always chosen to slay the minority, or to delay it, or to overcome it, is to assert that the minority is the enemy of the people. That has ever been the trick of the cheap politician, the hired liar; and because the people, with some exceptions, are incapable of reasoning calmly, or because ''the compact majority'' is expert in the vile art of distorting issues, they play into the hands of the foe by opposing the efforts of the minority which are directed toward the overthrow of the people's enemies and the removal of pollution and corruption. To denounce as an enemy of the people the few truest friends of mankind has ever been the trick of those who would maintain the *status quo,* whether in church affairs, or governmental policies, or in the realms of science and art and literature. To throw dust in the eyes of the people so that they shall not see clearly; to distort the truth; to put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; to defame, to deride, to cover with obloquy a name worthy of honor; to put under the ecclesiastical ban every man and woman who dared to employ their God-given reason;

to misrepresent the friend as a foe,—these have been among the characteristic traits of the reactionary majority in the Church as in the State.

The Self-Interest of Majorities.

Ibsen's point is well taken. He makes it clear that the majority leaders, as well as the "compact majority" itself, are often controlled by self-interest, while the man who stands most alone, the abused and hated and feared Doctor Stockmann, is the sole friend, crucified by the majority, which is swayed by hypocrisy, ignorance, passion, greed and malice. As a reward he receives brutal ingratitude, cruel suffering, unspeakable contempt. And this has ever been the fate of the few faithful friends of humanity. In the republic of mediocrity the man of individuality is regarded as a foe. Among the mass which lives on the low-lying plains of self-interest, the self-devoted truth-seeker is called a disturber. The weakling is content to have it so; the strong man is willing to stand alone and struggle, conscious of the fact that by his effort the sum total of human good is sure to be increased.

Israel Called an Enemy of the People.

I cannot conclude this brief survey of Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People" without addressing at least a final suggestion to you who are either of the House of Israel, or who sympathize with the point of view of the teachers of the House of Israel. The position taken by the world

toward the Jew has been, throughout the ages, like unto that taken by Norwegian society toward Ibsen, like that taken by the clique controlled by the Burgomaster Stockmann against the learned, fearless, and public-spirited servant, Dr. Thomas Stockmann. Wherever the Jews have gone they have been called "an enemy of the people." Entrenched power and the mighty influence of the Roman Catholic Church, for nearly fifteen centuries, misrepresented the people of Israel as the foe of humanity; while, since the Reformation began in Germany in Luther's day until today, Protestantism has treated the Jew almost as ungenerously as Roman Catholicism dealt with him inquisitorially and inhumanly. It is true, I hasten to add, that, during these nineteen Christian centuries, there have been a few chosen spirits, both in the Church of Rome and in the Protestant church, who have loved truth more than denominationalism; but one cannot deny that the general attitude of Christian society toward the Jew has resulted in misrepresenting him as an enemy of the people.

The Jew's Services.

Now, what has the Jew done to merit this persistent misrepresentation? He has given to the world its Scriptures and to Christianity its God. As Benjamin Disraeli somewhere says: "One-half of the world worships a Jew, Jesus, and the other half worships a Jewess, Mary." This is an epigram and not the exact truth, yet it fairly represents Israel's service to humanity. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that we have given to the world a

revelation of God and a book which Christian society says is the choicest product of the human race, for some reason or other, wherever we have gone, no matter in what land we have settled even for a brief time, the lie has been forged that the Jew is the enemy of the people.

The Jew's Sufferings.

I do not pretend to defend every Jew. I know that my people have many failings and as many weaknesses, and that they are guilty of as many mistakes as are the members of any other religious denomination. Yet what surprises me is not that the Jewish people, as a whole if you wish, have as many failings and weaknesses as they have. I am ever and again surprised that any Jew, no matter in what land he lives, has anything but weaknesses and failings; that any Jew has any virtues in him at all. For nineteen centuries they have been made the scapegoat of human hate. For nineteen centuries they have been constantly derided and denied. For nineteen centuries they have been ignored and outraged. For nineteen centuries they have been refused the opportunity of living on the soil or of developing the soul. For nineteen centuries they have been shut out from schools and universities, driven into the filthy ghettoes and forced to become money-lenders or second-hand clothing dealers; aye, they have been compelled by the governments so to become. For nineteen centuries they have been treated like Ishmaelites, when the world should have known that Jews are not *Ishmaelites*, whose hands are against all men and against whom are all men's

hands, but *Israelites*, whose function it is to reveal to the world an ennobling and world-uplifting conception of God.

Israel's Protest.

For God has assigned to Israel the divine mission of bringing to mankind the clarifying truth of a pure and simple faith. Others taught that you cannot reach heaven except by the way of the creeds. Israel said "the good of all people are saved." That was a fierce blow on the head of priestcraft, and priestcraft returned in kind. Others said, you cannot come unto God except by the way of the church. Israel said in the name of God, "Wherever I permit my name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee." That was another blow at the mighty, entrenched power of the church, and the church returned in kind. Israel said that man can be sure of God's pardoning love without any form of intercession; no one need come, no one ought to come, between man and his Father in heaven. This was a mighty blow at Christian dogmatism which asserted that we need the intercession of a divine and crucified master. Israel ever asserted this and Jesus himself taught it in that wonderful parable, "The Prodigal Son," in some respects the most remarkable parable ever spoken or written. "I will arise and go unto my father and say, Father, I have sinned against Thee." When Israel taught that theological intercession was unnecessary, another blow was delivered against entrenched power

which deemed it necessary, perhaps in self-defense, to denounce Israel as the enemy of the people.

And Still the Hatred Lingers.

One would imagine that, in this twentieth century, when truth and freedom have in America been made the pillars of society, here at least we would find such a phase of human progress that the Jew would be estimated at his true value, and that even though ninety Jews out of a hundred, let me say for argument's sake, might be unworthy, the ten who are worthy would be acceptable to worthy people in every community. But such is the blind hatred of the majority; such is the weakness of the system which makes majorities appear to be always right, that we need, every now and again, almost a revolution in order to reassert the rights of the minority.

Personally, I see nothing, even in America, for those who represent the minority but, like Dr. Stockmann, to permit ourselves to be called the enemy of the people; while by our life, by our service, by our character, and by our unceasing protest against entrenched unjust majorities, to prove that the minority is right while the majority is wrong. Such a service is no light task. We must be strong enough to stand alone if we are to be the servants of humanity. We cannot oppose the majority with impunity. Truth may be with the few, but numbers, masses, majorities, are not always interested in Truth. Yet Truth is the eternal need of mankind, as it always redounds to mankind's highest advantage.

Neither Shaken Off Nor Wooed Away.

God, therefore, assigned to a people the task of being the witnesses to the Truth. Books may contain the essence of wisdom and truth, but we have seen that books, as in the case of the library at Alexandria, may perish. Movements begin and end, rise and fall, suppressed or superseded by other movements which prove abortive. But a people living on the spiritual food of the noblest ideals; conscious of its historic mission; convinced of the truth for which it stands; and assured that the whole human family will, soonor or later, be partakers with it of the principles enunciated on Sinai's heights and on Judea's verdant fields; such a people neither dies nor surrenders; such a people must be the vanguard leading humanity forward. It is not in the nature of things for such a people to be shaken off from its purpose or wooed away from its duty.

Standing Alone.

It may be a solitary life for the oak which stands alone in the broad and open field; but alone it develops as it never would have in the forest, where it is forced to accommodate itself to such air and light and soil as it may gain in spite of the needs of all the other trees. Yet, for such an oak among men there is unspeakable joy; rather would he be a solitary growth than a mere tree in a forest of trees. The minority must ever be strong or it cannot stand alone. Its service taxes the character and courage of men and women. Engaged in a peaceful

warfare for Truth and Freedom, much is demanded of it. Uhland said truly:

> Der Dienst der Freiheit ist ein strenger Dienst;
> Er traegt nicht Geld; er traegt nicht Fuerstengunst;
> Er bringt Verbannung, Hunger, Schmach und Tod;
> Und doch ist dieser Dienst der hoechste Dienst.

"The service of liberty is a mighty service. It brings not money; it brings not the goodwill of princes. It brings banishment, hunger, ignominy, death; and yet is this service the highest service." We, who are so often called the enemy of the people, are called to such a service. Let us have no fear! We have seen in our laboratories that out of the blackest coal the brightest light is evolved; and I am sure that, from among those who were members of the minority and whose names were covered with the blackest hate, the greatest illumination has been given to mankind. Rather, I say, be burned at the stake of a rotten public opinion than surrender human individuality! Rather, I say, be sent to death or endure any physical pain than renounce God's choicest gift to us, our independence! Men may call us creatures of contention and strife; rather, a thousand times rather, be so regarded, than be dead fish floating with the lazy stream of the reactionary majority!

HENRIK IBSEN

VII. The Master Builder*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel xxxiii.

If when the watchman seeth the sword come upon the land, he bloweth the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. (Ezekiel xxxiii., 3, 4).

There is an ancient tradition, much modified by modern Higher Criticism of the Scriptures, that three of the books of the Bible said to have been written by King Solomon were composed by him at three different stages of his life, one when he was a young man, one when he had reached middle age, and one when he was an old man. These three works are the Song of Songs, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes,—works which represent this king in three different phases of his literary, political and moral experiences. In his youth he is said to have written the Song of Songs; in his middle age he is said to have composed the Book of Proverbs; in his old age he is said to have produced the Book of Ecclesiastes.

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

An Interesting Parallel.

The Song of Songs contains an exquisite pastoral, a love poem idyllic in form, written by a young Hebrew to a beautiful maid in the northland. She was evidently his inferior in station, but had charmed him with her attractive ways and appearance. Though she was dark she was comely. The book abounds in Oriental wealth of figures and the aroma of the vineyard and orchard. The bloom is on the grape and the blush is on the fig, while the birds sing their merry carols in high glee; and, although Jewish and Christian scholars have been able to employ the text of this book as a metaphor through which God is said to reveal His love for His church, modernists see in the Song of Songs only a fine specimen of ancient Hebrew pastoral poetry.

Solomon and Ibsen.

The Book of Proverbs, supposedly written by Solomon when he had reached middle age, contains a summary of bits of wisdom and excellent texts, inculcating a far-seeing prudence such as clever men work out for themselves from their experience on life's battle-field. Fortunately the Book contains more than mere counsels of perfection and prudential philosophy, for no man can be a Jew and not realize that the world has at least two phases, the seen and the unseen, the material and the spiritual, the known and the unknown, the finite and the infinite. Hence the Jew is under a divine compulsion to pay heed to the spiritual side of life, and therefore in Proverbs we find wisdom extolled if it is grounded in reverence for God. In

this Book we find that sound moral advice which has commended the work to the hard-headed Scotchman who, as you know, has used it as ethical manna for the nourishment of the child's moral life, for as you also probably ment of the child's moral life, for as it is popularly reported the Scotch bring up their children on porridge and Proverbs.

Proverbial Philosophy and Spiritual Truth.

But we also find in this Book that deep and underlying reverence for holy things which was a characteristic of the Hebrew and which has commended his sacred literature to the attention of the best and wisest among men. The author earnestly advises us to look well to the ways of our daily life and to adorn ourselves by that divine wisdom which is the end and aim of human endeavor. Hence we find that wise prayer of Agur the son of Jakeh, who asked God, "Remove from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." Hence we read the sane and sage advice to avoid the strange woman whose ways lead to Hell, in whose bosom is fire,—and it is as impossible for a man to take fire in his bosom and not be burned as it is for a man to walk upon hot coals and not be scorched. Indeed, Proverbs contains not only the philosophy of the prudent but the spiritual outlook of him who is blessed with the heavenly vision.

The Wisdom of Old Age.

The Book of Ecclesiastes, written in the old age of its author, discloses a philosophy of life, at once, sad, dis-

tracting and thought-provoking. The writer cries, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity. What profiteth a man all his labor under the sun? The eye is not filled with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. All rivers flow into the sea, yet the ocean is never filled. How sad the fate of man; if he could only be sure that his end is not that of the beast! If he might only be certain that the spirit of the animal goeth down to the ground while his ascends to God! But," says the author, "I have searched through all the days of my vanity and I have found that God hath put eternity into the heart of man," (Ecclesiastes, iii., 11). What a wondrous thought expressed so long ago! No matter who wrote the book this one idea deserves to be repeated as long as lips express language, for it is this ideal and the actions it stirs which mark the dividing line between the animal and man.

The Idea of Eternity.

Man is thus a creature now pulled this way and now drawn that. He is an individual soaring between the finite and the infinite, now dragged downward to the earth, now attracted to the eternal heights by the power of this sense of eternity which God has planted in the human heart. Thus this philosopher, who has tasted the sweets of life and has learned how bitter they can be to the palate; who has gotten for himself all that his eyes beheld and his heart desired; who was more powerful than all the kings that were before him in Jerusalem; who built for himself gardens and palaces and obtained men-singers and women-singers; who had denied himself

none of the pleasures which delight the heart of man; found that life is vanity and without any savor of happiness; and he, therefore, recommended that the best thing a man can do is to live happily with his wife all the days of his vanity, anoint his head with perfume and wear garments that are always white, and end by having inscribed on his tombstone, "He was born, he lived, he died."

The Summary of Human Duty.

But he finds even this philosophy of no avail because of that perplexing and yearning desire for eternity which God has placed in man. Man cannot, therefore, limit his vision to the things that are and that are on earth. Knowing that he must die, he is haunted by hopes and ideals, by "harps in the air." The body returns to the dust, but the spirit? Ah, the spirit; what of it? It shall return to the God who gave it. Therefore, this would-be pessimist, who had extinguished the fires of optimism by over-indulgence, is forced, in spite of himself, to record it as the ultimate expression of human wisdom that there is nothing better for man than to "revere God and keep His commandments."

Ibsen's Progress.

In the traditional story of Solomon's literary life we find some parallel to that of Henrik Ibsen's. At the time that he wrote the work we are to discuss this morning he was already reaching old age, being in his sixty-fifth year. He has received abundant honors. He is received

by his own and, after an exile of twenty-seven years, he has returned to Norway to live. He has been crowned with the highest distinctions that can come to a man of his chosen profession. He has been recognized as an immortal, and his works have been translated into the most important modern tongues. His plays have been performed in the leading theatres of the world; the most famous actors and actresses have found it a delight to interpret his characters on the stage before admiring and wondering audiences. He is now as much surfeited with the sweets of public attention as during the first fifty years of his life he had been permitted to hunger for them. He is resolved to reside in Christiania until he is to depart from this earth forever. Surrounded by all the marks of public appreciation he is not happy; accepted and respected he is not content.

His Unhappy State.

He has seen the big world, and now feels himself "cribbed, cabbined and confined" in the narrow life of the Norwegian capital. He feels himself out of place amid the petty and restricted environment of the social and political activities which he has done so much to bring into disrepute. Moreover, he is obsessed with the idea that he is about to be left behind by the caravan of progress. He has, it is true, invented a school of thought which has become a cult, but he realizes that there are those already in sight who will soon outstrip him as he has outrun others.

He had been the faithful watchman on the tower and he had loyally sounded the trumpet of warning. He had no misgivings about having fulfilled all the obligations he owed to his conscience and his fellowmen. But he was conscious of the approach of old age, and after that the silence of the tomb. True it is that he had been in the vanguard of human thought for many years; but he now became overpowered with the thought of the vanity of human effort.

His Service.

He had shown that woman is the equal of man, and that she must not be kept a slave any longer through economic dependence, and that the only way that she can become a worthy mother, the bearer of a race of physical and moral Titans, is to have her share the responsibilities which, in a social world ruled by man-made custom and law, have been regarded as the sole privileges and rights of manhood. He had dared to attack the institution of marriage which, in a form which had degraded and enslaved womanhood, had prevailed throughout Europe for centuries, and he had pleaded for a higher and more ennobling form of marriage commensurate with the higher and more distinguished position to be accorded to woman as time proceeded, and more worthy of the companion who is the mother of the race.

He had laid his finger neither gently nor timidly upon many of the weaknesses of society as at present constituted, and had fearlessly indicated that there is

only one condition worse than divorce, namely, the impossibility of securing release from intolerable marital conditions. He had flayed the Pharisaism of modern society, and had held up to scorn and well-merited contempt the sins and crimes of the shallow and artificial men and women who comprise the ranks of a spurious leadership. He had been the watchman. He had sounded the cornet. Those who failed to heed would bring their blood upon their own heads.

The Younger Generation.

The attitude of Ibsen, so common-place in our day, was revolutionary in his own time. He stepped ahead of his day. The pendulum of progress swayed forward with him; but he observed that, now that he had reached his sixty-fifth year, he could proceed but little further. A new generation was coming up from behind, would press upon his heels and would threaten to leave him behind as he had outstripped others. He knew that his end was fast approaching, and so, like the traditional Solomon, he turned away from the social drama and entered upon a new, and last, phase.

Ibsen's Various Phases.

In the beginning of his career Ibsen had striven to make his writings possess the quality of "interestingness," which Tolstoy, in his "What Is Art," regards as an integral element of all poetry. In his earlier publications he had written without the purpose of introducing his readers to any of the grave problems which con-

stantly face humanity and which are ever pressing for solution. He had only sought to interest his readers with delightful pictures of life, or romance, which might in a harmless fashion help the reader or onlooker to pass a pleasant hour, or evening, at the theatre. He had no idea of attempting the discussion of the weighty and all-important religio-moral or ethico-political questions; nor had he striven to be a teacher of men or a revealer of the difficulties which confront humanity in its progress toward a higher standard and finer stage of civilization. During this period, which lasted from 1854 to 1863, he produced such works as "Lady Inger of Ostrat," "The Feasting of Solhoug," "The Vikings at Helgeland," "The Comedy of Love," and "The Pretenders."

The Saga Plays.

In the next period he turned to history and then to religion, and produced what are called the "Saga Plays." Among these we find "Brand," "Peer Gynt," "Emperor and Galilean." A further development set in and Ibsen cast aside all thought of interestingness, of romance, of history, of theology. Life now engaged his attention. He saw the sins of society, and he felt that the correct study of man is man. As he approached his fiftieth year he became conscious of the fact that he had in no way touched the social existence of man. There lay in his soul depths which he had not sounded until he began to deal with the problems which confront man as a social unit.

The Social Dramas.

He mounted the watch-tower. He stationed himself

as a watchman on the heights. He was conscious of the enemy attacking the very fortress of civilization, and unsparingly he attacked the foe. If his hearers or readers failed to catch the spirit and meaning of his message their blood would be upon their own heads. During this period, ranging from 1877 to 1886, he produced "A Doll's House," "Ghosts," "An Enemy of the People," and others. He has passed through such phases of experience as the traditional view of Solomon would have us believe Israel's wise monarch had. He has written his pastorals and proverbial wisdom, as it were, and now he turns to the inner realm of human motive and idealism, to a searching of the "psyche" of humanity, in the attempt to guide and warn. He is henceforth the writer of psychological force, the dissecter of the inner springs of human action.

He Traces Human Development.

He is now a white-haired, feeble man. The fires are getting low. The hey-day in the blood is cold. He looks back on the past calmly and philosophically. But, in his heart, there is that sentiment of eternity to which Ecclesiastes referred. The main-spring of human action can now be dispassionately considered. For man, when in vigorous health, while life brings him the fulfilment of his desires, seems to care little what he makes and how he makes it. Scarcely does he consider even the morals of posession. Little does he heed aught but the need of getting and having. He is obsessed with the power which arises from mere ownership. Those who would check

him by wise counsel speak in vain. Those who point out the inevitable end are regarded as skeletons at the feast. Those who sound the trumpet of warning are stigmatized as "wet blankets." The sounds emitted fall upon deaf ears. For man, under such circumstances, is like the deaf adder, who heeds not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. It is only when age approaches that man sees how, like an Esau, he is crying over his lost birthright, "Father, hast thou only one blessing?"

A Familiar Illustration.

Consider, for a moment, a familiar illustration! A man starts out in life full of ambition and high purpose, determined to make of himself, as so many do, a someone; fixed in his decision to obtain for himself a name, a position, a fortune. He cares little how he obtains the object of his ambition; he little heeds the methods to which he will, and does, resort. Since it is so frequently observed that a slavish society estimates human success by money, poor man, he too thinks that all that is necessary for the highest success is money.

The time comes when nothing but money, money, money, can satisfy the aspirations of the man's psyche. And so, as a lawyer, he commercializes the law; as a physician he commercializes medicine, selling his ability for money and little concerned with the advance of the noble art he practices. And so as a merchant he stoops to tricks and meretricious methods to charm, from the

pockets of the unsuspecting and innocent, the money which is made "and not by righteousness." The advertisements we sometimes read in the papers would indicate that as a dealer in merchandise he must lose a fortune each year. Of course, I exclude the honorable in the ranks of the professions and the trading circles; but it really does appear that many a man sells not goods, or service, but his soul, in his love of money.

And when he has made money, well, what then? Who is he and what is he, unless he react to the idea of eternity which God has placed in the human heart? To that summons all of us must respond some time. The day of judgment comes for all of us, here as well as hereafter. Each of us must, sooner or later, pass judgment on our life. Around us stand our children, in many cases praying for the hour to come when we must open our hands and all we have must pass from our relaxing grasp into their possession. There they stand, often merely tolerating our presence, greedily marking the passage of the hours which take us ever nearer and nearer to the unavoidable end. For this, some of us toil in the effort to obtain a fortune! Is not such a fortune more often a misfortune? Shall we, then, turn pessimists and cry with Solomon, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?"

The Joy of the Ideal.

Indeed not! Such a reflection is only found true of the man who has never been conscious of an ideal which

is not subject to the law of change. The man who, through all the chances and vicissitudes of human life, has cherished a high ideal, and has never been known to turn from it to the right or to the left; who has high hopes, even though they appear forlorn hopes; who has his castles in the air and lives in them, while others may have their real castles with their skeletons in the closets; that man, who aspires, who yearns after the higher and nobler things of the world, is the only man worth while. He is the master builder.

Pegasus, Weighted by Selfishness, Sinks to Earth.

Such, I think, was the frame of mind to which Ibsen had come when he entered upon the psychological phase of his work. He holds up to reprobation the ignobly ambitious, and the selfish and unscrupulous, who are ever afraid that their glory may be dimmed. He shows them capable of nobler and better things, of being possessed of capacities which respond to idealism and aspiration; but he shows how selfishness weighs them down, how the Pegasus of inspiration is clipped of its wings by a malign streak of envy and an evil trait of jealousy. In "The Master Builder" he expresses these truths with great force, and he fulfils his function of watchman by showing how such a frame of mind, no matter what be its previous endowments, must result in unbalancing and driving to destruction the man who, attempting to return to his former idealism, finds himself vanquished by the indwelling influence of the consequences of his own fateful weaknesses.

The Dramatis Personæ.

The man who is to illustrate these facts is Halvard Solness. In the play, besides him, we find Aline, his wife; the family physician, Dr. Herdal; Knut Brovik, an old and failing architect; his son, Ragnar Brovik, a promising and able architect who, like his father, is in the employ of Solness; Kaia Fosli, the niece of Knut Brovik, the office girl in the architect's house; and Hilda Wangel, by far the most interesting character in the play. The action occurs in and around the residence of Solness, which is also his office; and in order to understand the play we must, as is customary in all of Ibsen's dramas, review the situation leading up to the incidents of the piece which are the natural outcome of certain previous events with which we must first be familiar if we are to enjoy the performance.

The Career of Solness.

The Master Builder began his career as a poor boy from a country village in the employ of Knut Brovik. Endowed with more than average ability his talents earn for him a competency. He has married a woman of means, to whom an old manor, surrounded by large grounds, has come as an heirloom. This property becomes the source of wealth and great success, architecturally speaking, to him. He knows that there is a crack in the chimney of the house and, hoping that this flaw may be the means of finally destroying the home, he refuses to repair it. He hopes the house will burn down, and then, instead of rebuilding it, he will

develop on the property a whole section of beautiful homes, which will bring wealth and fame. All of which comes to pass. While he has planned without pity or remorse, and while what he has foreseen actually happens, it does not occur just in the manner he designs or desires. Of this incident Solness says to Hilda Wangel,

"I had noticed the flaw in the flue long, long before the fire. Every time I went up into the attic I looked to see if it was still there. No one else knew about it. Every time I intended to set to work to repair it, it seemed just as if a hand held me back. Not today, I thought,—tomorrow; and nothing ever came of it. I was revolving in my mind: through that little black crack in the chimney, I might, perhaps, force my way upwards,—as a builder. At that time it appeared to me a perfectly simple, straightforward matter. I would have had it happen in the winter-time,—a little before midday. I was to be out driving Aline in the sleigh. The servants at home would have made huge fires in the stoves. It was to be bitterly cold that day, biting cold, and they would want Aline to find it snug and warm when she came home. And as we drove home we were to see the smoke. But when we came up to the garden gate, the whole of the timber-box was to be a rolling mass of flames. This is how I wanted it to be, but it has been clearly ascertained that the fire broke out in a clothes-cupboard,—in a totally different part of the house."

The Builder's Fears.

The burning of the old house brings with it a terrible retribution, for it occurs but a few weeks after his wife has given birth to twin boys, who die as consequence of the exposure on the winter night. The result of the fire, in other respects, brings him the fulfilment of his professional hopes. He has, by building houses on the large acreage of the old homestead, gained a reputation as an architect which easily places him in the front rank in his

city. But the sad misadventure has left his wife a hopeless woman; while Solness himself, now a middle-aged man, is consumed with a fear of retribution for the many pitiless and ungenerous deeds of which he has been guilty. He is obsessed with the dread of being displaced by the younger generation. He has been without bowels of mercy towards others, and he is terrified as he thinks of the time when others may drive him from the position he has gained. Old Brovik hints at the remorselessness of his employer when he says to him, "You had learned little enough of the business when you were in my employ. But that didn't prevent you from setting to work, —and pushing your way up, and taking the wind out of my sails, mine and other people's."

The Cause of His Fears.

The dread of being displaced is intensified through his recognition of the unquestioned talent of the younger Brovik, whose services he must retain at all costs, and whose rising fame he must becloud if possible. To this end he keeps Kaia Fosli in his employ. She is engaged to the promising young Brovik, and Solness feels that Ragnar will remain with him so long as he can keep Kaia. Kaia, however, has lost interest in Ragnar, having transferred her affection to Solness himself, who has a way with him which proves attractive to a certain type of woman, and who encourages the young woman in her fancy, although he is thoroughly insincere and without the slightest affection for the girl. To him, however, all means are sacred which will enable him to keep Ragnar from seeking a career for himself outside of his office.

Solness's Selfishness.

In the opening scene we see the older Brovik pleading with Solness to give his son the opportunity of building a villa for some wealthy clients whom the master builder has refused to see. The father seeks the mark of approval for his son's plans, for, since Solness cannot, or will not, build the villa, the clients are satisfied to have Ragnar do so. It is old Brovik's over-mastering desire to live to see his son recognized as an architect of promise; and, as the old man is feeble, he pleads most pathetically for the master's acknowledgment of his son's ability. Solness brutally refuses to indulge the old man's desire, and the father departs, never, in this life, to receive the consolation he so naturally desires.

Fear of Being Outdone.

The reason for the perversity of Solness is made clear in a conversation with Dr. Herdal. He is haunted by the fear of being outdone by a younger man. In spite of the doctor's appeal, Solness remains obdurate. He says, "Some day the luck will turn. I know it,—I feel the day approaching. Some one or other will take into his head to say: 'Give me a chance.' And then all the rest will come clamoring after him, and shake their fists at me and shout, "Make room,—make room,—make room.' Yes, just you see, doctor,—presently the younger generation will come knocking at my door. . . . Then there's an end to Halvard Solness."

As if in answer to these words a knock at the door

is heard and Hilda Wangel enters. She has come to claim the kingdom which Solness promised her ten years before to the very day. It seems that at that period, when she was but a girl of thirteen, Solness had been at Lysanger completing the construction of a new spire on the village church. In accordance with the prevailing custom the master builder, on such occasions, climbed to the vane on the spire, and placed a wreath on the very top of the spire. This Solness had done amid the approving shouts of the populace, among whom had been Hilda, who had waved a flag and vociferously cried, "Hurrah for Master Builder Solness!"

Hilda Wangel's Function.

The ceremonies completed Solness had paid a visit to the home of Hilda's parents. There Hilda displays her innate sense of hero-worship, and her childlike faith in Solness stirs him to the depths. He accepts the fragrance of her flattery and, in playful mood, he takes the girl in his arms, kisses her "many times" and promises that, in ten years, he would return and make her a princess, take her to a kingdom in Spain or carry her off to some other place of romance.

The ten years have passed and Hilda has come to claim her kingdom, since he has not come for her. Of course, Solness has not the slightest recollection of the incident to which this ambitious girl has clung. He soon sees, however, that from the flattering circumstance of her implicit faith in him he may be able to derive suf-

ficient inspiration to offset the growing power of Ragnar. He can set youth over against youth. He, therefore, pretends to recall the performance to which Hilda has referred and remarks, "The more I think of it now, the more it seems as though I had gone about all these years torturing myself with . . . the effort to recover something,—some experience, which I seemed to have forgotten."

How Solness Turns Hilda to His Advantage.

Unasked and uninvited Hilda Wangel remains as an unbidden guest in the Solness household. The master builder has long since found it impossible to treat his wife as his companion, and, to his utterly self-centred nature, visions of future power arise as he conceives the use he can make of the girl who regards him still as her hero. We readily see how he is determined to turn this experience to his advantage from the following conversation:

Solness. **(Rises slowly).** What a good thing it is that you have come to me now.

Hilda. **(Looks deeply into his eyes).** Is it a good thing?

Solness. For I have been so lonely here. I have been gazing so helplessly at it all. **(In a lower voice).** I must tell you, —I have begun to be so afraid,—so terribly afraid of the younger generation.

Hilda. **(With a little snort of contempt).** Pooh,—is the younger generation a thing to be afraid of?

Solness. It is, indeed. And that is why I have locked and barred myself in. **(Mysteriously).** I tell you the younger generation will one day come and thunder at my door! They will break in upon me!

Hilda. Then I should say you ought to go out and open the door to the younger generation.

Solness. Open the door?

Hilda. Yes. Let them come in to you on friendly terms, as it were.

Solness. No, no, no! The younger generation,—it means retribution, you see. It comes as if under a new banner, heralding the turn of fortune.

Hilda. **(Rises, looks at him, and says with a quivering twitch of her lips).** Can I be of any use to you, Mr. Solness.

Solness. Yes, you can, indeed! For you, too, come,—under a new banner, it seems to me. Youth marshalled against youth.—!

Adult Bodies With Children's Heads.

It is possible that such an idea would never have occurred to Solness were it not for the fact that Aline Solness has remained undeveloped, an adult child still grieving over the loss of her nine dolls. She accepts the death of her children, and regards it as her duty not to rebel against the will of God. But she broods over the destruction of her dolls, deceiving herself into the belief that she is resigned at the death of her babes while indulging the luxury of the grief produced by their death, by believing that she is only sorrow-stricken at the loss of her dolls. Aline is like some of those adult males who have the bodies of men and the heads of boys. It is impossible for the ambitious builder to find in her the mate and friend he feels he needs. Hilda Wangel, with her deep and unalterable faith in his ability, with her anxiety to have him be the only really great builder, wafts to his self-seeking soul the incense of her confidence. Her worship of the hero of her dreams awakens anew in him the ambitious desires he earlier felt pulsating throughout his mind and body. Her confidence in his supremacy makes him feel himself supreme. Cruel, ungrateful, self-

centered, ignoble, he may be; the girl's adoring attitude is the needed stimulus to a new impulse to further effort

Spiritual Comradeship.

There is nothing indelicate or suggestive in the comradeship which develops between the two. Mrs. Solness is incapable of interference, nor indeed does she find any reason for unwillingness to have Hilda abide under her roof. On the other hand, Hilda's influence over Solness tends to inspire him with renewed confidence in himself, and the spiritual friendship of the young woman only serves to strengthen and revive him. He confesses to her, "You are to me like a dawning day. When I look at you,—I seem to be looking towards the sunrise."

Whatever be the mystic meaning of the symbolism of the play it is clear that the purity of the young woman's nature kisses into life the best that is in the man. She it is who insists upon him endorsing the building plans made by Ragnar Brovik, and, although Solness admits the rising ability of the promising young architect,—the only kindly thing we read of the master builder throughout the play,—the fatal flaw in his character leads to no good result, for the news reaches the older Brovik when he is past all human need or help. Hilda serves to bring Solness out of the slough of despond into which he has fallen. Without entering upon a psychological diagnosis of her character we may, I think, regard her not only as a foil to the childish and undeveloped nature of Aline, but as a helpful and ennobling

stimulant to the flagging powers of a man who might have been really great.

The Climax.

In developing the climax of the play the author informs us that Solness is just about finishing a new home for his wife and himself, and the structure is far enough advanced for the architect to place the wreath upon its tower, in accordance with the custom to which reference has already been made. It is well known that he gets giddy when he climbs on high scaffolding, and his successful venture at Lysberg, when Hilda cheered him, was an exceptional experience. The members of his household and his workmen urge him not to place the wreath on the tower of the house. Dr. Herdal expressly forbids him to do so.

But the perfume of Hilda's confidence enchants him. He must prove to her that he is all she thinks. Her unbounded faith in him must not be shaken. Accordingly, in spite of all protests from the others, he is seen climbing to the height of the spire. His workmen stand astonished. He actually reaches the top of the tower, hangs the wreath upon it and waves his hat in the air. Hilda is triumphant. The observers join her in shouts of joy and congratulation. But, horror of horrors, the spectators stand with their shouts frozen on their lips. For amidst their shouts which turn to shrieks, "a human body, with planks and fragments of wood, is vaguely perceived crashing down behind the trees." Solness is

crushed to death in the quarry hard by, and when Hilda is informed that her hero is dead, she is only conscious of his effort. She exclaims, as if in quiet, spellbound triumph, "But he mounted right to the top. And I heard harps in the air." She waves her shawl and with wild intensity shrieks, as the curtain descends, "*My,—My* master builder."

Interpretation Difficult.

Great difficulty is experienced by all who attempt to interpret this play. The difficulty with all symbols is the practical impossibility of being sure that we understand the purpose of their creator. One sees in "The Master Builder" this, and one sees that. But here and there we catch glimpses of the purpose of the writer which seem to be gleams of truth. Ibsen seems to have drawn a picture of the degeneration which sets in when a man permits his ideal to be cheapened or lowered by mean passions. No man can build higher than his ideals, but no man dare tamper with them. As soon as he does degeneracy begins, and the blessing he might enjoy is converted to curse.

The Power of the Ideal.

The ideal leads us on and up. It is the aspiring quality of the human soul. By its power man rises above the rest of creation. Its silent voice haunts us like "harps in the air." Its music, unheard by the physical ear, charms and chastens our soul. Man is made to build

castles in the air, as it were. Without these "castles in Spain," without these inexpressible aspirations, without the far-off vision of better and higher things, without the passionate yearning for the unattainable, man is a poor creature indeed. His feet should be planted on the earth firmly and securely, but his head should be above the clouds. It is only thus that mankind has been enabled to dream dreams and see visions,—the quality of the prophet, the spirit of the saint and martyr. The ideal is man's spiritual birthright; and he who sells it, or debases it, lowers himself and ends by bringing destruction upon himself. He builds the tower which either falls upon him or from which he ultimately falls.

The Spiritual Decline of Solness.

We are able to see the spiritual degeneration in Solness. He began by building churches,—a subtle suggestion of the consecrated effort of the ideal. When at Lysberg he reached the top of the church vane and placed the wreath upon it, he determined that he would change his course of action. Perhaps, building churches did not pay and he would sell his art for the power that comes with money! On that occasion he confesses he said,

> "When I stood there, high over everything, and was hanging the wreath over the vane, I said to him: Hear me now, thou Mighty One! From this day forward I will be a free builder,—I, too, in my sphere,—just as Thou in Thine. I will never more build churches for Thee,—only homes for human beings."

From that time on he declines spiritually. His pride, arrogance, cruelty, doubt, jealousy, all tend to rob him

of power. His Pegasus loses its uplifting force. His ideal is rapidly dying. In place of eagle's wings his are henceforth the wings of a sparrow. But a man must, he is under a divine compulsion if he is not as a dumb brute, be true to the appeal of the ideal. He must climb to the height to which he has been created to aspire. But for this he is only a foul beast encumbering the fair highway of existence, a two-legged brute defacing the exquisite paths of the beautiful garden into which God has sent him at birth. No wonder, then, that, in spite of a new inspiration, a fine stimulus to noble deed, the man who has tampered with his soul overbalances himself and falls to destruction when he seeks the heights from which he has voluntarily descended for the sake of selfish advantage or personal gain. A man must be true to his ideals. Yes, he must be true to his ideals, or invite an awful fate for the highest quality with which God has endowed him.

Woman's Friendship.

The symbolic poem has, however, other suggestions. Hilda Wangel appeals to different critics and readers from different angles of vision. I have heard her berated as "a bird of prey." I have read in some of the interpreters of Ibsen that she is "the embodiment of the low impulses a bad woman is capable of producing in a man." I have seen it stated that she is "the complement of the evil that is in the nature of Solness and, therefore, becomes his undoing."

To me Hilda stands in a different light. She is the

embodiment of that spiritual comradeship which is ever and again found between men of fine gifts and women of beautiful and deeply moral character. There are women who have been to men as Beatrice to Dante, who have been the impelling influences in the development of their gifts and talents and genius. Not to speak of mothers and wives, of sisters and daughters; to them it is utterly beyond human power adequately to express man's undying debt of grateful praise. But there have been noble women whose loyal and abiding friendship has been the spur to man's dull powers. There have been and are women who, by their faith, their loyalty, their admiration, have revealed to men depths of feeling of which they were unconscious, powers of soul and mind of which they knew naught until, noble souls, these sweet and trustful women, by the nobility of their character and the purity of their esteem, awakened within men qualities and virtues with which they were hitherto unacquainted.

I speak not of those vulgar affinities to which vile and sensuous natures respond. I speak of those ennobling friendships of women for men, which are as pure as the love of a mother for her little daughter, and to which the fine souls of noble men react. Such friends have led men to aspire to the heights, to cling to the spires of thought and feeling, to mount ever higher and higher. Such have been they who have renewed the flagging energies and awakened the failing powers of those who, but for them, would have fallen by the wayside.

Such friends have been as the dew to the thirsting flower, as sunshine to the darkened earth, as the sail to the shipwrecked mariner. To respond to this appeal of "spiritual comradeship," to endeavor to reach the heights to which such women believe those they admire and love with an angel's purity, men have bravely dared, and if their daring has brought defeat, and even death, there is for them more joy in such brave daring than in never daring at all.

Ignoble Ambition.

Some see in "The Master Builder" a warning to man against the sin of ambition. Those in front fear those who are coming on from behind. We have heard from the lips of many a moralist that ambition is a deadly vice. We have been told by the dramatist that through ambition even angels fell. But the normally healthy man who lacks ambition never yet lived, and never will. It is crucial to human development that we should desire tomorrow to be better than today. It is normal for healthy persons to desire to have more, to get more, to be more, that they may become more and do more. But we must be careful to distinguish between ambition, the virtue, and ambition, the vice,—the sin of covetousness. The steeds of life's chariot are sometimes spirited. If we cannot control them we invite destruction. A man must be able to check the desires of his heart, to control the yearnings of his soul. If they run away with him he will find that, though he place the wreath on the vane of his hopes, he will invite his own overthrow.

Radicalism and Conservatism.

The last suggestion I desire to leave you may appear a little far-fetched; but as I read "The Master Builder" the thought ran through my mind as "harps in the air." The idea captivated me; I could not let it go. The struggle of the younger generation with the older is the story of the development we see in the matter of religion's form. In Solness I see the personification of Conservatism. In Ragnar Brovik I see the personification of Radicalism. The attitude of the master to the young man is not unlike that of the typical orthodox leaders who ever fear that the radicals will tread on their heels and finally outstrip them. The rights of the younger generation have over and over again been denied by those who are infatuated with the old largely because it is old.

The Philosophy of Progress.

It is possible that sometimes the young plants send forth their shoots a little early in the spring and are nipped and frost-bitten for their hardihood. But it is better, far better, that some young shoots should meet with such a fate than that no young shoots should ever be permitted to break into bloom. Far better that we should thus err sometimes than that life should never be permitted to make its normal and natural manifestation. A man must live his own life and his own religion. We cannot live the life or the religion of those who preceded us. If we are not to be vain wraiths of other men we must think for ourselves. If it is true that many will

not take the pains to think, that is no reason why the appeal to personal endeavor should never be made. Nothing can possibly be worse for mankind than to live forever under the obsession of the old mistakes, with none appealing to us to remove the ship of progress from the old moorings. As each and every child who lives becomes an adult and must make his own life, so each of us must do our own thinking and carve out for ourselves our own ideals of life, and God, and duty, and truth. These may or may not harmonize with the views of the fathers; but they will be our own. This privilege the older generation must not, in the name of human liberty and progress, deny the younger generation.

For orthodox men and women who are loyal and pious there should be naught but reverence and esteem. But orthodoxy is a system, as is also radicalism. Both of them are states of mind; and a man must be true to his convictions. Without such honesty there is no hope for humanity. We must be mutually tolerant, attacking only falsehood and credulity and superstition. How often have kindly men and women said to me, "You have no right to share the truth with others. The truth blinds the eyes of those you seek to enlighten. It is all very well for you," they say, "to hold such opinions, but it is the height of unwisdom to share them with others who have not had your experience."

The Younger Generation Has Rights.

No good purpose is served by denying the truth.

Whatsoever progress has been achieved for human good has been attained only by the service of the truth. It has taken many into a wilderness where the masses have rebelled. But the truth is the holiest cause which man can serve, nevertheless, and only moral anarchy can result from tampering with it. In due time the younger generation must take our places. Deny to them the truth, and let them deny it to their successors, and what becomes of the possibility of progress?

Let us have no fear! The younger generation, under the guidance of the present which is resolved to fulfil its duty as leader, will find itself. As we in our day, so they in their day, will revere the best we reveal to them. The radical of today will be orthodox a generation or so hence. We should not seek the stultification of the individual, nor the throttling of all individuality in our young. The old are climbing to the heights, but the end must come for them. Let us see to it that the young are duly prepared and fitted to take our place when we shall, in due time, lay down the burden of life. There can be no standstill. There must be perpetual effort to reach the heights. We may fail and fall, but the younger generation, inspired by our effort, shall reach heights unattained by, and perhaps unattainable to us. Our duty is not to deny the younger generation the expression of its ideals. We should indulge them, so that by our helpful guidance they reach forward to spires of thought and towers of truth unseen and undreamed by us.

HENRIK IBSEN

VIII. When We Dead Awaken*

AN ADDRESS IN THE RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
PITTSBURGH, SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1915.

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel xxxvii.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. (Psalm xxix., 2).

When Henrik Ibsen issued the play with which we shall close our study of his writings, he was in his seventy-fifth year. As it was the last work he composed its sub-title, "A Dramatic Epilogue," was prophetic. His great mind produced nothing of literary value after he had written "When We Dead Awaken." In a few years his body lay in its last home, its earthly elements commingling with the dust of mother earth; but the children of his mind, like the soul which inspired them, are still with us, destined to enjoy an immortal existence.

Shine and Shadow.

Ibsen's experiences had been enthralling. They had been composed of the woof and warp of denunciation and appreciation. He had been bitterly opposed and abused. He had been severely criticized and outrageously lam-

*By the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, Rabbi of the Congregation. Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

pooned. He had been made the butt and target of every form of vituperation. But on his seventieth birthday the people who had denied him and the country which had neglected him received him to their heart with open arms.

Outside the national theater in Christiania a bronze statue of heroic proportions now paid its unspoken tribute to the admiration in which he was universally held. A performance of the play, "An Enemy of the People," which more than any other of his writings might be regarded as the *Apologia pro vita sua,* (the explanation of his life purpose), was given in the theater in the presence of the representatives of the government and of the leaders of the society of his native land. His only child, Sigurd, had married the daughter of his friend and the literary contemporary, Byornsen. The sunset of life was imminent and the glorious luminary promised to sink to rest behind the purple hills when the skies were clear and the eventide was calm. Out of storms he had emerged into a delightful tranquillity. From the lips of foes he had forced the utterance of appreciation. From the hands of opponents he had wrested the wreath of honor.

Asked Questions and Established Tests.

But Ibsen was not the kind of man to be satisfied with earthly good and terrestrial favor. He had illuminated the path of man and had outlined a constructive programme, (Cf. Lecture of January 24, 1915, pages 69 and 70), which he could now put to the test, since he felt that his work was done. True, his function was to ask

questions; but he also established tests. Now he was about to ask these questions of himself and to apply these tests to his own life.

He could not depart without seeking an answer to the personal question whether his own life had been worth living. If a man live to the age of seventy-five and during the first two-thirds of it is hated and abused; if he suffer for decades from the blighting effects of unrequited affection; if those he has placed most under a deep debt of obligation fail to perceive it; if he look to the world for an expression of appreciation which comes not; if he be long denied all the rewards which patient toil should bring to the artist; can his life be called a success? His own experiences must, therefore, be reviewed with the purpose of revealing what the artist must regard as a due reward for his labor, what the sculptor of the individual life must view as the great end and aim of all his efforts.

Ibsen's Use of Material.

Ibsen had dealt in his plays with practically every phase of human occupation, and while his own life had not been broad; while he had seen but little of the earth; while he had intimately known very little of the world of statecraft; while he knew little of any language but his native tongue,—a fact which made it difficult for him to be understood as he desired to be; while he had seen very little of humanity in its Protean phases; still his own personal and inner experiences had been very exten-

sive. What he has left to us as his literary legacy is not what other men thought, but what he himself had beaten out on the anvil before the flaming forge of life. He had discussed trade. He had written of commerce. He had inveighed against society. He had treated of the church. He had bitterly criticized the state. He had dealt with men and women whose occupations were devoted to literary effort and also to material success.

Now Turns to the Artist.

But to him every man is an artist, a sculptor, who is to carve for himself a figure with the materials with which he is provided at birth and such accessories as may come to him from his environment. Life is a statue which each must design for himself. Therefore, in his last play, he presents a great sculptor for our consideration. He is to show us what a modern Praxiteles or a Phidias, a modern Angelo, or a Canova, might do with his life; and by revealing to us the inner workings of the sculptor's soul, by demonstrating to us the psychology of the artist, he hopes to prove to us that men fail by unfaithfulness to their ideals, and succeed by their loyalty to the inner light which discloses to them the highest forms of beauty.

Standards of Beauty.

To understand the mysticism to which Ibsen reverts in his "When We Dead Awaken," we must know something of the standards of beauty which have been established for us by those who were particularly qualified to

deal with them. For beauty is an aspiration unto which, in its varying and varied manifestations, man has ever turned. Nations seem to have been selected or elected or chosen for the purpose of revealing to humanity these standards of beauty by which the races of man might be able to guide themselves. There are those, of course, who regard those nations calling themselves "chosen" as narrow and petty: but to attribute to one's race and nation the highest qualities and to regard the stranger with scorn is a characteristic not of one people but practically of all people.

Nations, Like Persons, Chosen.

If it is true that the Jews called themselves the chosen of God, it is no less true that the Teutons called themselves the Deutsch, a modern form of "theodsc," which means *the* people. If it is true that the people of Israel regarded themselves as the descendants of Shem and held that the Shemitic, or Semitic, people were specially elected of God to produce the people of Israel, His "first-born son;" it is no less true that the people of India, the ancestors of the European races, called themselves "Aryans," a name which is derived from a term meaning "light." Thus the Aryans regarded themselves as the dwellers in the light, while all other races and nations were held to be their inferiors. The Romans called their own people *Cives Romani*, Roman citizens, while all others were called *alieni*, aliens. So the Greeks called themselves by the distinguished title of *Hellenoi*, while all others were known to them as *Bar-*

baroi, the term from which the word *barbarian* is derived.

Three Chosen Nations.

Three nations of antiquity have long been regarded as specially entitled to the term chosen, inasmuch as they rendered services to mankind which have laid all men under tribute to them. In modern ethnological dissertations we are accustomed to look upon the peoples of Rome, of Greece, and of Judea, as being the purveyors to humanity of those ideas and ideals by which nations live and the souls of men subsist. It is true that modern peoples have greatly added to the forms and features of the rich civilization which has come to us through Greece, Rome and Judea,—yet it is true that these three "chosen nations of antiquity" have provided us with all that is needed by men to find their way through life in peace and safety and satisfaction.

Their Gifts.

We are accustomed to hear that Rome taught the world the important lesson of government by law, and we observe that very few nations have excelled, in their scheme of government, this ideal of ancient Rome. So, too, we frequently hear that ancient Greece was the donor of the white arts and of philosophy for the delectation of the human race. We know that, to this day, no building has ever graced the earth to excel the Parthenon, while the works of Praxiteles and Phidias still charm the eye and delight the souls of men. And just as modern artists must go to school to Greece of old,

so modern philosophers must sit at the feet of Socrates, and on the banks of the Ilissus or amid the walks of the Academia learn wisdom from the lips of these ancient masters. What is true of Rome and Greece is no less true of Palestine. The religion of the world, at least among the highest civilized races of man, is indebted to a handful of men and women of Palestine for their revelation of the highest truths yet disclosed to humanity. The Holy Bible is Israel's contribution to the Temple of Mankind. Government, art, religion,—these are the gifts of the three chosen nations of antiquity for the benefit of the human race.

Conceptions of Beauty as Order.

This truth has often been enunciated to you. Today let us pursue it a little further. To these ancient peoples these concepts which they were "chosen" to reveal are but the expression of an underlying truth which makes all their striving an effort along the same line. All three peoples sought to bless mankind by a revelation of what we call beauty. The Roman of old conceived that beauty consisted in order. To him "Order was heaven's first law." Can you conceive of anything which mere nearly represents the ideal of a perfect order than the legion of ancient Rome? If Germany has astonished the world by her military machine it is because, like Rome of old, she associates the idea of beauty with that of order. The Roman government placed every man in some position in the State as a tidy man places his papers into the pigeon-holes of his roll-top desk. A place for everything and everything in its place

was the theory of military precision by which ancient Rome became the world conqueror.

As Form.

The Greek had an altogether different idea of the same theme. To him beauty was associated with outward form, but in place of order he dreamed of it under the form of symmetry, and thus conceived a holiness of beauty. He observed the human body and he remarked that the gods had imposed on man their own forms which were graceful and symmetrical. The one eye is offset by another eye nicely placed on either side of the nose which has one nostril offset by another. The arm on the right side of the body is balanced by an arm on the left side, and so throughout the entire body observation will make it clear that organ balances organ as muscle balances muscle. Now, symmetry means the perfect balance, and this is ideal beauty. Applying this idea to the state, the Greek conceived that symmetry of life, a nice balancing of pain and pleasure, would bring to man the fulfilment of his highest hopes.

As Holiness.

The Jew differed with Greek and Roman, and his views of man and the universe differed vastly from theirs. He refused to accept the one and he utterly rejected the other. The prophet Zechariah even went so far as to express the peaceful warfare of ideas between Judea and Hellas in this sentence, "Thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece." To the Jewish conscious-

ness beauty had nothing to do with externals. It bore no reference to physical conditions or circumstances. It was an internal relation. The Psalmist expressed it in the words taken for the text of this discourse: "Worship the Lord in the *beauty of holiness.*" The writers of Scripture waste no time describing the personal appearance of their heroes and heroines. They rarely speak of their physical graces. The Greeks might have their *graceful* gods; Israel revealed to mankind a God of *grace.*

Therefore, in the consciousness of Israel's teachers, the conception of beauty bore reference to the qualities of mind and soul rather than to the matters of order and symmetry. Apollos and Hebes are not the centers of Hebrew thought as they are of Hellenism. Beauty lay, in Israel, in the response of the human soul to its divine Creator. Made in the image of a spiritual God, man becomes endowed with the subtle quality of beauty if he becomes godlike, or godly, or holy. "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." This is the prevailing note of Hebraism. Beauty is, therefore, an intangible and an invisible condition or state, which results from a proper appreciation of the will of God touching the life of man. We might well say, as sons and daughters of Israel, "The kingdom of beauty is within you."

Beauty, thus, is holiness, and they who reach a state of holiness are beautiful. To create an orderly arrangement of society, or to carve the graceful lines on the marble, are enthralling occupations. Only the few can ever reach such a state. But to mould one's life in ac-

cordance with the rules of the highest art,—the art of right living,—this is within the power of all who seek God. Israel's service is fundamental. It is the one thing needful for humanity's progress. Without the beauty of holiness, every other form of beauty is vain. To attain to this state is to make a real success of life. To fail to realize it is to make shipwreck on life's heaving sea. Not art for art's sake, nor order for order's sake, but the beauty of holiness, rather than the holiness of beauty, is the theme in accord with which each of us must seek to realize the ideal, faithfulness to which brings the Divine approval, and faithlessness to which is the measure of human failure. This, it seems to me, is the theme on which Ibsen wrote his dramatic epilogue, "When We Dead Awaken."

Ibsen's War on Selfishness.

All through his literary career he had been endeavoring to impress this lesson. In almost every play he wrote since he undertook the role of the social philosopher he had warned his readers and hearers against the deadliest sin which ever stung the soul of man with its torpedo touch,—the sin of selfishness,—the ugliest, the vilest, the meanest, the most contemptible trait in man; the sin which mars the lines of beauty in the human soul and which effaces the divine beauty in the form created by the hand of God.

All through the social dramas and the psychological plays, Ibsen had displayed before his audiences the debasing and demoralizing influences of the power sought

for the love of power. No man ever consecrated his genius with more unswerving devotion to the denunciation of the vices which deface the beauty of the soul of man than he. He was in love with beauty and he directed our attention to its charms by endeavoring to make us hate its antithesis, the ugly and hateful propensity to selfish indulgence. And now, as a last word, he would have his readers learn that there is something much higher than the external qualities which dazzle the eye and enthrall the selfish heart. Power is good if gained to promote human welfare. Art is good if employed to serve human aspiration. Beauty is good if it is the expression of the relation of man's soul to the All-soul. Otherwise power becomes despotism, and art becomes idolatry, and beauty becomes sensualism. To impress this truth upon us Ibsen, as is natural, turns to the artist's studio for his subject.

Preliminary Suggestions.

He tells the story of a sculptor, Arnold Rubek, who, when somewhat advanced in years, has married Maia, a young woman, and, as is so often seen in actual life under like circumstances, the couple disagrees. There is no spiritual bond between them. They lead independent mental existences. The man is an artist of renown. The frivolous woman has no sympathy with her husband's aims. Rubek is a man of great powers and rejoices in his art. Maia is a woman who loves life on a low plane. There was a time in Rubek's life when he was lost in his art, when he produced a work which

gained him fame through his supreme ability and through his utter devotion to his profession. But degeneracy has set in, and when we first meet him we find him thoroughly dissatisfied with himself and totally discontented with his domestic fate.

Husband and Wife Antithetical.

Nor could it possibly be otherwise in his case. He is endowed with the artist's soul, while his wife has not the slightest comprehension of the subtle and invisible products of the imagination which stir the man. He is possessed by the unsatisfied longings of the artistic temperament, while she is ever longing for mere physical enjoyment and the comforts which appeal to the flesh. His soul is wracked by remorse, and knows no peace because of the inaudible, but very real, accusations of his offended conscience. In this state his rather silly wife is of no help. On the contrary; she is rather a hindrance to his reclamation. They are tired of each other. To Maia the ideal man is the sensuous and pleasure-loving hunter, Ulfheim, whom she later meets at the summer hotel at which they stay. To Rubek the ideal woman is the antithesis of his wife. Verily the man has invoked a terrible Nemesis, while the woman is inviting a fearful fate.

The Downward Path.

The artist's fall from grace has been gradual and has followed imperceptibly, but naturally, from his own views of his own function and purpose. He is an artist. He says of himself, "I was born to be an artist." With

him nothing else counts: The artist, according to Rubek, must pursue the power which comes to him from his art for the sake of power. It has no other end than to produce the fragrance of flattery in the nostrils of the artist, the sense of strength to the wielder of the chisel, the consciousness of ability to the master of the palette. Now, Ibsen holds that this is all wrong. The artist must, if he is to succeed ideally, employ his art for the purpose of embellishing, uplifting, beautifying, consecrating, life. How is it that Rubek underwent this transformation for the worse? What down-pulling force has dragged him from the throne of true power and handed him over to the demon of selfishness? How came it that, where once abode the soul of the true artist, now is found the man of debased purpose? Why do we find the grey and dying embers of unavailing regret where should be found the glowing coals of a high aspiration? Let us see!

Rubek's Masterpiece.

In the days when the artist's soul was still alive to the appeal of the spirit of true beauty, he had fashioned a piece of sculpture which gave utterance to his high ideals and masterly skill. He calls this work, "The Resurrection Day." In the course of the play he explains the purpose of his work and the aim he sought to fulfil by designing and carving it. He says to Irene, his model,

> "It was to be called "The Resurrection Day,"—figured in the likeness of a young woman awakening from the sleep of Death. . . . It was to be the awakening of the noblest, purest, most ideal woman the world ever saw. . . . I wanted

to embody the pure woman as I saw her awakening on the Resurrection Day. Not marvelling at anything new and unknown and undivined, but filled with a sacred joy at finding herself unchanged, —she the woman of earth,—in the higher, freer, happier region,— after the long, dreamless sleep of death. Thus did I fashion her,— and I fashioned her in your image, Irene.''

Art for Art's Sake.

But once the great work is done the artist no longer feels the sense of obligation he owes to the woman whose sacrifice has made his work possible. Irene, his model, is, spiritually speaking, the mother of their ''child,'' this statue which has brought him fame and wealth. She is his inspiration, his faithful impulse to success of the highest order. But the man does not see it. He is enraptured with the beauty he has formed in the clay; he is infatuated with his own creative genius. The woman has been made to love the man to whom she has given the best in her soul. The man regards this experience, which has fruited in this immortal work, as ''a mere episode.'' He loves his art for art's sake. He realizes no obligation to the pure and innocent woman who has virtuously preserved her reverence for her sacred honor, and who has offered on the altar of her love her all. Slowly she turns from him, disappointment eating at her heart, and with her departure the man's pristine power also departs. He is never again the consecrated artist. His selfishness is his undoing. He retains his talent, his genius; but never again can he reach the height attained in the work which has brought him his place and power. These facts must be presupposed before the curtain rises.

The Dramatic Epilogue.

On a calm, warm and sunny summer morning Professor Arnold Rubek and his wife, Maia Rubek, are seated, when the curtain is lifted, outside the Bath Hotel at a summer resort on the Norwegian coast. Breakfast is but just finished and both are reading newspapers. Ere long it becomes very evident that they are ill at ease. As stated before, they are typical misfits. He has failed to find in her the inspiration he has lost in losing Irene, while she has failed to find those elementary forms of social life, and endless rounds of pleasure, which natures like hers desire. As we first meet them and listen to their snarling we feel sure that the matrimonial bond is being strained to the snapping point.

The dissatisfaction which Rubek expresses with his present life is but a feeble attempt to put into words the thorough-going contempt he feels for himself. He is conscious of his deterioration, and only he knows the truth. His frivolous wife notices that he is restless, but gets no hint of the reason, except that she feels he is discontented with her. She in her turn is far from contented with him, for he had promised her to "take her up to a high mountain and show her all the glory of the world." Needless to say, she utterly failed to understand the metaphor.

Ibsen Describes Humanity.

In an address which Ibsen delivered before the Norwegian Women's Rights' League in 1898 he said, "I have

been more poet and less social philosopher than people seem inclined to believe. . . . My task has been the description of humanity.'' In this play he endeavors to illustrate the service which the artist may render to humanity; and he portrays the Professor struggling with himself because he has been faithless to humanity and has turned his noble opportunity, his power, into a source of wealth. He has fallen from his high estate. Maia asks Rubek whether he thinks that the work he is now doing,—carving portrait-busts,—is worthy of the man who has made a marvellous masterpiece. Nowhere does he show the deterioration of his genius more clearly than in his reply. He remarks:

> ''They are not exactly portrait-busts that I turn out, I assure you. . . . There is something equivocal, something cryptic, lurking in and behind these busts,—a secret something, that the people themselves cannot see. . . . I alone can see it. And it amuses me unspeakably. On the surface I give them 'the speaking likeness,' as they call it, that they all stand and gape at in astonishment, but at bottom they are all respectable, pompous horse-faces, and self-opinionated donkey-muzzles, and lop-eared, low-browed dog-skulls, and fatted swine-snouts,—and sometimes dull, brutal bull-fronts as well— Simply the dear domestic animals, Maia. All the animals which men have bedevilled in their own image, and which have bedevilled men in return.''

The cause of this change in the Professor's method is not difficult to discover. The inspirer of his masterpiece is his model, Irene, and to her he has been, as we have already seen, utterly faithless. She might have stirred the artist to his noblest endeavor; but he deserted her as soon as his great work, ''The Resurrection Day,'' was finished. From that time on he knows no inspira-

tion; for the beautiful young woman, as he puts it, "held the key to the casket in which are stored up all his sculptor's visions." Their separation has produced evil effects on both.

Rubek Meets His Model.

At the Baths the Professor once again meets Irene, who is registered under the name of Madame de Satow, and is attended by a Sister of Mercy, her "shadow." Maia soon understands that the meeting has aroused in Rubek all the old longings, while she finds herself much more at home with the worldly and sensuous Ulfheim, with whom she goes off on a bear hunt. Left alone with Irene, the whole of his past, with its promise and its failure, floods his mind with ghostly and ghastly memories.

To Rubek his model had only been an artistic object; to Irene the sculptor had been the one person adored above all on earth. His experience with her had been "only an episode;" her experience with him had been life's highest revelation. When he had dismissed her from his life he had imagined that it would be possible for him to continue his art without her. Too late he discovered that without her his imagination knew no flights. Irene upbraids him for having beheld in her only the artist's model, while failing to see that her soul was aflame with love.

The Great Refusal.

It is here that Ibsen reveals to us the purpose of the play and its appeal to humanity. In refusing, or in be-

ing unable, to reply to the appeal of the woman's soul, Rubek had debased his art. He had regarded art as an end in itself. He had gained power for the sake of power. He had been utterly blind to the appeal of all that was noble and beautiful in Irene's soul. He had been the artist, not the man in whose soul there should have grown the yearning to possess her who had been so much to him. Their separation had proven injurious to both of them, just as injurious as is art when employed for other than the sake of life's embellishment, for other than an ennobling service to humanity. We may gather this from the following conversation,

Rubek. And you did serve me, Irene,—so bravely,—so gladly and ungrudingly.

Irene. Yes, with all the pulsing blood of my youth, I served you!

Rubek. **(Nodding with a look of gratitude).** That you have every right to say.

Irene. I fell down at your feet and served you, Arnold! **(Holding her clenched hand towards him).** But you, you,—you,—

Rubek. I never did you any wrong! Never, Irene!

Irene. Yes, you did! You did wrong to my innermost, inborn nature,—

Rubek. I—!

Irene. Yes, you!

Rubek. **(Looks impressively at her).** I was an artist, Irene.

Irene. **(Darkly).** That is just it. That is just it.

Go Up Higher.

The conversation continues at length, but Irene serves only to make clearer and ever clearer the grave wrong the artist has done to the soul of the woman. When Arnold Rubek speaks of his projected trip with his wife along the coast, Irene suggests to him to seek the mountains and wishes to know if he would meet her there.

Irene. You should rather go high up into the mountains. As high as ever you can. Higher, higher,—always higher, Arnold.

Rubek. Are you going up there?

Irene. Have you the courage to meet me once again?

Rubek. **(Struggling with himself, uncertainly).** If we could,—oh, if only we could!

Irene. Why can we not do what we will? **(Looks at him and whispers beseechingly with folded hands).** Come, come, Arnold! Oh, come up to me!

In this passionate appeal we feel the soul of Ibsen transferred to the spoken word. Rubek can, but apparently will not; and not unlike him are so many of us in whose lives there has come a revelation of the beauty which is holiness and from which we turn sorrowfully away.

The Cause of Decadence.

In the second act Rubek has yielded to the appeal of Irene. They are now on the heights. The four characters, Rubek, Maia, Irene, Ulfheim, are at the mountain resort. Maia goes off with Ulfheim; Irene and Rubek

go off into a reminiscence of what might have been. The sculptor's descent from the height to which he attained through the inspiration of the pure woman is seen in his tampering with their "child," the now world-famous statue. She upbraids him for having been the "artist who had so lightly and carelessly taken a warm-blooded body, a young human life, and worn the soul out of it, —because you needed it for a work of art."

The return to the past is not pleasant. It nearly maddens the woman, and displays the man consumed with remorse. He has even gone so far as to change his original statue, "The Resurrection Day," because its sweet simplicity no longer appealed to his soul debased by his own loss of purity. The awakening figure is no longer a work by itself. It has become part of a group and "a receding figure" at that. "Irene had represented the awakening of the good; the new figures represent the resurrection of the evil." He tells her,

> "I imaged that which I saw with my eyes around me in the world. I expanded the plinth,—made it wide and spacious. And on it I placed a segment of the curving, bursting earth. And up from the fissures of the soil there now swarm men and women with dimly-suggested animal-faces. Women and men,—as I knew them in real life."

The sculptor is conscious of his error. He knows that he has sacrificed his finest powers for the sake of power. But he continues,

> "Yes, but let me tell you, too, how I have placed myself in the group. In front, beside a fountain, as it were here, sits a man weighed down with guilt, who cannot quite free himself

from the earth-crust. I call him remorse for a forfeited life. He sits there and dips his fingers in the purling stream,—to wash them clean,—and he is gnawed and tortured by the thought that never, never will he succeed. Never in all eternity will he attain to freedom and the new life. He will remain forever prisoned in his cell.''

When We Dead Awaken.

It is needless to follow the ramifications of the second act to learn that the mismated couples find themselves again, Irene with Rubek and Maia with Ulfheim. All have planned an expedition for the night. Maia will go hunting with Ulfheim, accompanied by Lars, the groom, and his dogs. Irene will meet Rubek, whom she acknowledges as her ''lord and master.'' They part, but only for a few hours.

Irene. **(Rises and says softly).** We must part then. No, you must remain sitting. Do you hear? You must not go with me. **(Bends over him and whispers).** Till we meet again,—tonight,—on the upland.

Rubek. And you will come, Irene?

Irene. Yes, surely, I will come. Wait for me here.

Rubek. **(Repeats dreamily).** Summer night on the upland! With you! With you! **(His eyes meet hers).** Oh, Irene, that might have been our life. And that we have forfeited,—we two.

Irene. We see the irretrievable only when,— **(Breaks off).**

Rubek. **(Looks inquiringly at her).** When,—?

Irene. When we dead awaken.

Rubek. **(Shakes his head mournfully).** What do we really see then?

Irene. We see that we have never lived.

Such is their doleful commentary on their spoilt lives. But Maia, who is off on her hunting expedition, who finds Ulfheim such a jolly companion, so full of interest and entertainment, sings in the distance,

> "I am free! I am free! I am free!
> No more life in a prison for me!
> I am free as a bird! I am free!"

The Tragic End.

To lives so unhappy, to plans so thwarted, to threads so tangled, there can be but one end. The tragic conclusion we anticipate is not long in coming. The scene in the last act is rugged. Sheer precipices are on one side. Snow-clad peaks are on the other. The mists drift over the snow-capped tops of the mountains. A long and uninteresting conversation holds Maia and Ulfheim engrossed in each other until they meet with Rubek and Irene. The bear-hunter perceives the coming storm and bids all flee to safety. The exalted state of Rubek and Irene leaves them insensible to his warning. Maia and the hunter descend to safety, but there will never more be descent for Rubek and Irene, neither physical nor otherwise. They dread neither avalanche nor tempest. Their only fear is a return to the conditions which both have come to deplore.

In the last dialogue we learn that Irene might have slain the man as he had slain her soul. She desisted only because she saw that "he was dead already, long ago." Their intimate talk leads us to see that all earth-

love in them is dead. But Arnold is persistent. He pleads with Irene to begin anew now that they, being dead, have awakened.

Rubek. Then let two of the dead,—us two,—for once live life to its uttermost, before we go down to our graves again!

Irene. Arnold!

Rubek. But not here in the half darkness! Not here with this hideous dank shroud flapping around us—

Irene. No, no, up in the light, and in all the glittering glory! Up to the Peak of Promise!

Rubek. There we will hold our marriage-feast, Irene,—oh, my beloved!

Irene. The sun may freely look on us, Arnold.

Rubek. All the powers of light may freely look on us,—and all the powers of darkness, too. Will you then follow me, oh, my grace-given bride?

Irene. I follow you, freely and gladly, my lord and master.

Rubek. We must first pass through the mists, Irene, and then,—

Irene. Yes, through the mists, and then right up to the summit of the tower that shines in the sunrise.

But such hopes are to be dreamed, not realized. The storm comes and overtakes them. They are enveloped by the mists. The tempest rages and grows in violence. Irene's shadow, the Sister of Mercy, appears and seeks her mistress, whom she fails to find. Amid the roaring tempest Maia's voice is heard singing "I am free." But the avalanche falls and carries Irene and Rubek with it to their death. The only words uttered by the Sister of Mercy are here spoken. She shrieks the name Irene and,

making the sign of her order, prayerfully utters the words, "Pax Vobiscum," Peace be with you!

The Fearful Nemesis.

The closing scene recalls at once the final moments in the story of "Brand." Dead to all sense of reality must we be if we do not feel the awful solemnity of the termination of the struggle in these souls, disappointed and destroyed by a false appreciation of the only beauty we are to seek and interpret, the beauty of holiness. To use life for selfish ends, to develop our powers for unconsecrated purposes, means debasement and pollution. It brings remorse, the unutterable longing which slays all initiative, the sense of loss which saps our spirit of all vigor. Only those who understand the saddest of all words, "It might have been," will fully comprehend all that Ibsen endeavors to convey by "When We Dead Awaken."

Humanity's Dull Vision.

The great dramatist has reached that period in his life when he naturally tests what he knows by what he has endeavored to do. He knows that Truth and Freedom are the pillars of society. He has sought to make them secure, realizing that security cannot be obtained by a slavish regard for what the masses conceive to be right. The master must reveal the truth to us, and we must seek the freedom which the truth alone can insure for us. It is seen that the new revelations of truth are opposed by those they will most help, and that he who would most befriend mankind is all too often denounced

as the foe of those whose savior he is. Time, therefore, is the element which will count for most. The old cannot see the new truth and they must therefore die in the wilderness. But the young shall enter the land into which their ancestors through their purblind condition cannot find the way. The way to the Land of Promise lies over the paths of loving service, of unselfish endeavor, of art for the sake of life, of the beauty which is holiness.

The Falling Soul.

Under the symbolism of the sculptor who tampers with his ideal Ibsen discloses to us the progressive descent of the soul from the heights until it no more can see them. He denounces art for art's sake as every prophet has denounced money for money's sake, and knowledge for its own sake, and power for its own sake. Nothing is profitable in this world except it be shared with others. The law of life is giving, not having. To retain for one's self that which Providence has bestowed upon us is to be guilty of an unpardonable sin. We must deny ourselves and we must share ourselves and all we have. For if a man pray,

> "God bless me and my wife,
> My son John and his wife;
> Us four and no more."

what is he but one of those portrait-busts which Arnold Rubek used to make and on which he carved the lines of animals? There is only one power on earth which has ever saved man,—power acquired for unselfish ends,

power dedicated to God through service for man. He who seeks power for vain-glorious purposes writes the death-warrant for his own soul.

Unselfish Service.

At his birth man is very low in the scale of being. There is nothing quite so helpless as a little babe, and there is nothing more merely animal in its desires and needs. The little applicant for immortality, at that early stage, eats and drinks and sleeps. But in that little animal there is the budding angel, or devil. To us as parents and teachers the task is assigned to develop the angel in the child. Some of these die at a very early age, slain by selfishness. The practical man of affairs tells us that we must look out for ourselves, for no one else will. Just so; we must look out for ourselves. I quite agree. Our purpose is the same; our methods and ideals differ.

Ibsen warns us that we must develop the spirit of unselfishness. In this he is at one with the greatest teachers of mankind. Who ever gained happiness, not to speak of blessing, through selfishness? Ibsen is right and is in complete accord with the Hebrew poet who sang, "If I have Thee, O Lord, I live when I die; if I have Thee not, I am dead while I live!" Some day, even those who think they are alive but are dead, because though they have eyes they see not, and though they have ears they hear not,—some day such as these will awaken from their spiritual death in life, and will begin

to live the only life which is worthy of the child of God, the life consecrated to Truth and Freedom, realized through unselfish ministry for others.

The Conclusion.

Our task is completed. We have endeavored to interpret the gospel of Ibsenism by a consideration of a few of his best-known plays. We have only skimmed the surface. We have but touched the upper crust of the large world of life; but we have seen and read and heard enough to know by this time that Ibsen was a critic of life, a man who felt himself called to take the negative position of the seeker after truth who must demolish the old before he can erect the new. He was no mere negationist. If he pointed out human faults and frailties he was not without his positive affirmation. No man can read our author without feeling that he desires in man "truth in the inward parts," and in woman the right to be free.

Truth and Freedom.

For truth he had a love which became the passion of his life. He makes it clear to us that without truth man will ever wander in a miasma of doubt and ignorance and prejudice and superstition. Whole and complete surrender to the cause of truth he therefore demands of man. Of woman he asks no less; but for her he demands more. She must have freedom if she is to be the mother of a coming race which is to be worthy of its great inheritance. Now, by freedom he did not mean

license. He uttered no gospel in behalf of the unwomanly woman whom a certain type of license, not liberty, is developing. For sensuality and idleness he held no brief. By freedom he did not mean more mannishness.

I have, in my investigations, been called to visit slums and red-light districts, and I have seen types of life which are not beautiful and which have about them no odor of sanctity and no savor of piety. I have no wish to associate the women I know with such unwholesome types. The cigarette-smoking mother is, after all, no inspiration to the modest girl we have a right to find in the ranks to which we belong. Let every woman live her own life, but I am not one of those who believe that by the surrender of "the eternally feminine,"—and you will remember that I am a strong advocate of suffrage for women,—our wives and mothers, our sisters and daughters, gain grace and favor in the eyes of those who would love them and accept them as their equals.

Human society will never exist until men and women understand that power is to be gained for unselfish ends. So long as the demons of selfishness control us, so long will earth be a hell and life a failure. He who teaches this is the friend of mankind. He who impresses this truth on us is no mere negationist. For the questions he asked and the truths he laid bare, Ibsen is entitled to our deepest gratitude. For the service he performed, for the help he has rendered the struggling soul, we, today, as we conclude our study, place upon his head the laurel

wreath and gratefully acclaim him who was long regarded as an enemy of the people as one who did much to strengthen the pillars of a possible human society.